

## Berlin is gaining momentum in the side streets

While the ABC tried their resurrection as a kind of Berlin at Gleisdreieck, the art fair opens position for the fourth time. More than 80 galleries present contemporary and modern art in the Arena-Halle on the banks of the Spree. The fair advertises to find quality away from the mainstream.

"We like to look in the side streets," says Heinrich Carstens, who heads the positions together with the gallery owner Kristian Jarmuschek. Jarmuschek is surprising with his gallery in the competition, representing Art Berlin. On the Positions you will find prices that also attract collectors on a smaller budget. In the section "Selected Positions" the work costs even a maximum of 1500 euros.

The art fair is still international. Tokyo's Frantic harmonizes Makoto Murayama's technical drawings of orchids with Kanata Goto wall art that are symmetrically strung. Christopher Cutts from Toronto has brought Mat Brown's garish eroticism in comic style. At Birmingham's Maus Contemporary, forgotten artists of the seventies and eighties are rediscovered, as are the romantic landscape photographs by Barbara and Michael Leisgen, whose snapshots of performances are in the mid-four-figure range.

German galleries are clearly in the majority on the positions. Almost half are Berliners. With the 1992 young from AIDS deceased Patrick Angus Stuttgart's Thomas Fuchs shows an artist who was committed to the gay nightclub scene of New York. The prices of the paintings are between 6000 and 80,000 euros. Somber-Mysterious by Constantin Schroeder offers the gallery Von & Von from Nuremberg, In some of his large-format paintings, the artist, who has studied theology himself, holds ecclesiastical gestures. The Brouwer Edition (Berlin) has mounted on the walls in her box "Drones" by Björn Schülke. The flightless sculptures are set in motion when you pass them (4000 to 8000 euros). Probably the most expensive work of the fair costs 150,000 euros and is by Carole Feuerman. Hübner & Hübner (Frankfurt) relies on one of her hyper-realistic swimmers made of painted bronze, with which the artist advanced to a crowd pleaser at the Venice Biennale.

The Berliners are self-confident too. At Burster, Wolfgang Ganter experiments with bacteria and photography. Opposite steal the humorous Dauerwürste Alex Feuerstein his larger works the show. Dr. Julius shows Esther Stocker and Hartmut Böhm, who combine their love for the minimal. Outsider Oliver Rincke, who works with wool and yarn, can be seen on Art Cru. A provocative-poppy Tapestry by Margret Eicher, on which one recognizes one or the other Star, takes on Horst Dietrich's consumer culture on the grain (32,000 euros).

Again and again one meets art from the Baltic States. A highlight are the canvas-mounted canvases by Egle Ridikaite (Contour Art Gallery, Vilnius). Maksla Xo from Riga shows with Kristaps Gelzis an artist who already recorded the Latvian pavilion at the Biennale. The aim of the fair is to further increase the number of participants from Eastern Europe in the future in order to support them in their tough economic situation in their home countries. Another new feature is the Academy Positions project in the Bikini Berlin shopping center. 29 students from German art schools get the chance to exhibit here.

All these programmatic parts give an image indicating a good way. In 2016, the fair generated almost four million euros. "Given these figures, nobody can claim that the Berlin art market is bad or does not exist," says Heinrich Carstens. With the positions one wanted to close the vacuum, which was created in the year 2011 with the abolition of the Art Forum Berlin. From now on, the competition will be tougher. The competition is called Art Berlin.