

Datebook: Art Book Fair Berlin

BY SARA ROFFINO, ART+AUCTION | DECEMBER 09, 2015



Vanessa Adler

Friends with Books: Art Book Fair Berlin takes over Hamburger Bahnhof December 11 through 13, with approximately 100 international publishers and artists participating in the event's second outing. Art+Auction's Sara Roffino caught up with director Vanessa Adler for an early read on this year's edition.

Who is participating this year?

It's a mix of older Conceptual artists and really young, cutting-edge artists. Some very exciting publishers who are participating are Múltiplos from Barcelona, Christophe Daviet-Thery from Paris, Edizioni Periferia from Lucerne, Tel Aviv-based the Paper Channel, and Vienna's Salon für Kunstbuch. We will also have editions by the Berlin galleries Little & Large and Black Palm Editions.

Why did you start the fair?

There are a few global players in the art book world, and then there are a lot of smaller, independent publishing houses that do great work but are not recognized. We really are interested in the complex work that artists are doing with books. We are not so much interested in highly designed stuff that looks good but doesn't have any content. We want books that are works of art, but I'm not talking about handwoven, hand-bound books—it's not that. It's not artwork in the sense of pottery or handicraft. It's more like Conceptual art books.

You're also including an exhibition at the fair, right?

Yes, we have several artists contributing pieces to an exhibition—they're either making works on paper or sculpture, or doing some sort of intervention into the space. The works aren't simply paper on the wall. For example, Rirkrit Tiravanija is making a series of editioned aprons.

Who forms the collector base for art books?

The works range from \$10 DIY zines to limited editions and photographs that can reach up to \$5,000, so it's a wide group. Artist books are often produced in editions of only 500, so if it's really a good book, it's quickly sold out and the price goes up. I have to say, though, it is a small scene. The fair is like a big family gathering where everybody knows each other.