

Art Cologne: A Fair That Made History

The origins of today's ART COLOGNE as a trade fair for classic modern art, post-war art and contemporary art go back to the year 1967. Kunstmarkt Köln '67 was launched on 15 September 1967 in a historic Cologne building – the Gürzenich. In medieval times it served as an arena for festivities, banquets and dances. Later, it served as a merchants' hall.



The launch of the Kunstmarkt Köln '67 was to have a profound impact on the international art market. The founders of the new fair were Cologne-based gallerists – Hein Stünke and Rudolf Zwirner. Their project was sparked by the urgency of the need to put new life into the lacklustre art market in West Germany.

Although the immediate post-war period saw a tremendous revival in art and radical changes to public attitudes to modern art, the art market in West Germany faltered. Paris was at the cusp of losing its central role as the capital of the modern art world and modern French art was about to lose market leadership. This occurred in the wake of documenta 2 in 1959.

With the boom in modern American art, New York took over as the new art capital. At the end of the war West Germany had lost its capital city and its cultural foci. With Bonn as the new capital city, the Rhineland – an industrial powerhouse at the centre of Europe driving the West German economy and acting as a hub for the entire western European economy – took over as the centre of the West German art world. Even today, North Rhine-Westphalia and its neighboring federal states have very high concentrations of business and industry – and art collectors.



In the early 1960s these were ideal preconditions for any art market project. Stünke and Zwirner's initial plans were of a short-term nature but their long-term aim was to promote the new art being produced by young German artists. They intended to introduce these artists to an international market and to attract new buyers to their work. They vastly exceeded their expectations - their project made history. ART COLOGNE has played a decisive role in the development of the international art market and has had a formative influence on all later art-market developments.

Since the early years, ART COLOGNE is a number one address for viewing, enjoying and buying top-of-the range artworks. Art lovers and collectors will find a broad range of modern and contemporary art in all price brackets and covering all movements.



Two hundred leading international galleries will be showcasing a carefully selected and curated range of top-quality 20th and 21st century artworks. New this year will be the co-operation between ART COLOGNE and the New Art Dealers Alliance in premiering the first European NADA fair. As NADA is a non-profit organization devoted to giving support and encouragement to those who work with new contemporary and emerging art, this will further enhance Cologne's long tradition of supporting new art.

In addition to the art shown by galleries, the grand entrance hall of the fair will be the venue for an exhibition of Dieter Roth focusing on his years in the Rhineland from the 1960s into the 1970s. And the ZADIK will again do a special exhibition focused on Konkrete Kunst. All in all the fair will be rounded by a supporting program scheduled at the fair including a series of public talks and discussions.

Art Cologne 2012

Where:

*Koelnmesse GmbH, Messeplatz 1, 50679
Cologne, Germany*

When:

18th to 22nd April 2012

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