

9 Gripping Artworks From the Berlin Art Week Fairs

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The Art Berlin Contemporary fair

The main venue of the biannual **Berlin Art Week** was the **Art Berlin Contemporary** fair, hosting 133 galleries from around the world, the majority from Berlin, as well as galleries from the rest of Germany and 22 other countries. Set in a converted train station and connected warehouse buildings, the fair space was designed as a deconstructivist version of an art fair, with open gallery spaces built out of exposed recycled materials, creating a feeling that the fair was one large installation. Each gallery presented the work of a single artist, many of whom produced works specifically for the space. Some took advantage of the fair's internal structure to incorporate elements of their work, others created time-based works that transformed over the course of the fair. We picked out a few highlights from the main fair, as well as its satellite, **Preview Berlin**.

Luca Trevisani, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Art Berlin Contemporary



Trevisani's time-based installation at the fair consisted of elegant mobiles and sculptural forms that incorporate flowers, ice, and resin. Over the course of the event, the installation decayed and transformed, providing a meditation on impermanence and the transitory nature of living things.

**Paula Doepfner, *I Need a Little Sugar*, Galerie Tanja Wagner, Art Berlin
Contemporary**



Another time-based installation that made use of ice, as well as glass and compressed plants, Doepfner created an environment that evoked the tension between the ephemeral and the permanent. The installation deals with the amygdala, the part of the brain that is essential for the evaluation of experiences and the perception of emotion. At the center of the installation was an ice block hanging from the ceiling and enclosing within it a piece of paper with handwritten scientific notes about the amygdala. The block melts over time, distorting and abstracting the text. At the periphery were sculptures composed of glass plates containing moss and plant blossoms, evoking veins and brain mass, and providing a counterpoint to the disintegrating ice sculpture at the center.

Anahita Razmi, *A Tale of Tehrangeles*, Carbon 12, Art Berlin Contemporary



Razmi's installation took the beginning of the Charles Dickens novel *A Tale of Two Cities* as the basis for a visual collage of Tehran and Los Angeles, where 750,000 Iranian immigrants and descendants live. The installation combines a two-screen city collage with a single-screen commentary monitor set up as a green-screen studio, with the artist as "anchorwoman," reading random passages from the beginning of the novel. Striking connections and similarities between the two locales are evoked, with the effect being the creation of an intermediate space or city.

Brigitte Waldach, *Brain Box*, Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Art Berlin Contemporary



Waldach's *Brain Box* graphically constructed the process that traces the mental path of an idea into an ideology. By stringing together a web of rubber bands and cords, she traces the links between external phenomena that inspire thought and action and the internal processes that transform those thoughts into an idea and, eventually, a system of belief. The installation is a matrix that invites the viewer to enter the space and contemplate their positioning in relation to society and history.

Julia Aranda, *The Knot is Not (The Rope)*, OMR, Art Berlin Contemporary



Aranda presented an array of banal sculptural objects, all executed in white. The installation—in effect a collection of useless things—speaks to the energy that material objects still maintain after they have exhausted their usefulness and perhaps even overstayed their welcome, like this vanishing rope, frayed to its breaking point.

Elizabeth Neel, *The Skin of a Dolphin is like that of an Eggplant*, Pilar Corrias, Art Berlin Contemporary



Neel's boldly composed works were among the few examples of expressive painting at the fair. Interspersed with monochromatic sculptures, the works reference animal bones and organic shapes, interposed with geometric markings.

Hahan, *Trinity*, ARNDT, Art Berlin Contemporary



Uji Handoko Eko Saputro, a.k.a. Hahan, is an Indonesian artist that derives his imagery from cartoons, anime, and pop culture. His series of cartoon-like sculptures comment on the commodification of the art market and the exploitation and loss of identity that artists experienced during the Indonesian art boom between 2007 to 2009. The sculptures represent the trinity of the curator, artist, and collector.

Preview Berlin Art Fair



Berlin Art Week's largest satellite fair was Preview, hosting 77 galleries, most of which are based in Berlin. The fair was located in a building housing the former painters' halls of the opera workshop in Zinnowitzer Strasse, where, until recently, sets for the major stages of Berlin were created.

Sebastian Schrader, Maerzgalerie, Preview Berlin Art Fair



Schrader's highly skilled and finely detailed paintings, rendered in an Old Masters style, present a mix of art-historical and contemporary subjects in often humorous scenarios. The works show a curiosity about the themes of ego, libido, globalization, and power.

Alexander Habisreutinger, Galerie Gerkin, Preview Berlin Art Fair

