

Interview

“Advanced collecting”

B3 curator Anita Beckers* and Prof. Bernd Kracke, Artistic Director of the B3, talk about the challenge of collecting time-based media art

What prompted you to address the topic of collecting at this year’s B3?

The visibility of moving image art is subject to different conditions than, for example, painting and photography. This is why large video installations are almost exclusively seen in museum contexts or extensive exhibition formats. The B3 is the platform for the current forms of media art. Because the number of supporters and collectors of media art is still relatively modest in comparison to other art forms, we have invited international collectors to demonstrate, by way of showcasing a selection of their collected works, that beyond the overheated art market there have been people intensively participating in the development of contemporary art for many years now. The expansion of artistic narration into time and space has provided contemporary art production with a further dimension and significantly influenced the creation of art. And it is these artists in particular who are much more strongly dependent on the dedication shown by collectors when it comes to the production and presence of their works. The exceptional examples shown from the collections invited to participate in the B3 make this more than clear.

The global art market is worth about 11 billion dollars. Contemporary media art only makes up a small part of this. Why?

Media art does not currently enjoy the same appreciation in value we see in the auction market for other types of art. The collecting of and interest in video art is in constant flux, and this is also influenced by online platforms. Though we use the same vocabulary we are generally speaking about different things. The

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younger Internet generation has developed a new “consumer behavior” that has not really been statistically investigated. We doubt that YouTube and other platforms will revolutionize the video art market, for a number of different reasons. In order for a video artwork to be able to unfold, it needs to be implemented in a framework of presentation specified by the artist, and this cannot be shifted to the Internet. The Internet may at best serve to provide information on the piece. We believe the consumption of video clips available online cannot be equated with the way in which collectors have been handling video art thus far. Video artworks tend to be limited editions, something we are also familiar with from photography. Whether the cooperation between artists and collectors on the different “marketplaces” of the future will create new markets for moving image art remains to be seen. Even though there may be an inconceivably large amount of art in the world, and this is also reflected in the international auction market, the market for so-called “good art” is becoming increasingly narrow, which may in future have a positive effect on the video market, too. New technologies may serve to facilitate this.

What distinguishes a collector of electronic art from collectors of, say, painting?

Our colleague Jennifer Gassmann once put this very succinctly. “Video art is not for show-offs. Collecting video art is advanced collecting.” This really gets to the heart of the matter. Collectors of time-based art tend to have a more serious and often much more passionate approach to the art they share with the artists, no matter whether they are more interested in the narrative or the documentary aspect. Major productions by artists are seldom possible without the support of their collectors.

**In 2017, Frankfurt-based gallerist Anita Beckers is curating the feature exhibition “ON DESIRE” together with Prof. Bernd Kracke, the B3’s Artistic Director. She has been collecting, supporting and presenting art related to the*

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moving image for over 20 years. Her gallery is a hotspot for contemporary video and media art. In 2013 she curated the video art exhibition “Nonliteral” for the first edition of the B3. In 2015, likewise with Prof. Bernd Kracke, she curated the B3 main exhibition “EXPANDED SENSES” at Museum Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt. (www.galerie-beckers.de)

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