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Final report:

Cologne Fine Art und COFA Contemporary: successful start for new concept

- Increase in number of visitors and a well-informed public
- Galleries and dealers report good sales in both areas
- Cologne Fine Art prize awarded to Candida Höfer

On Sunday, 22 November 2015, Cologne Fine Art closed its doors after six days. A total of around 15,500 visitors from Germany and neighbouring countries visited the traditional trade fair (2014: more than 14,000). For the first time Cologne Fine Art offered its own platform for contemporary art produced as of 2000 with COFA Contemporary. In this way the trade fair expands its 'classic' offer, which extends from Antiquity through modern and applied arts and design to the art of the 20th century. A total of 107 galleries and art dealers (2014: 98) took part in Cologne Fine Art and another 40 galleries and non-profit project spaces from the Rhineland in COFA Contemporary. "The experiment was a success", summarises Cornelia Zinken, Director of Cologne Fine Art. "With COFA Contemporary we have offered the strong Rhineland scene a new quality platform that had been missing up to now. Cologne Fine Art acquires a new and exciting facet that will also provide collectors and friends of art new insights and purchasing impulses in all offering areas in autumn."

For many participating galleries and art dealers of Cologne Fine Art, the new COFA Contemporary was well-received as an expansion of the range of offerings. **Laszlo von Vertes** (Zurich), trade fair participant for 35 years now, confirmed: "Cologne Fine Art is very harmoniously structured, pleasant and coherent. A refreshing and pleasant casualness prevails at COFA Contemporary. A large number of young visitors also found their way to our stand". Von Vertes sold a work by Andy Warhol to a collection and accepted a reservation for a painting by Hermann Max Pechstein. "Our collectors find it exciting that they can now also have a look at contemporary art at Cologne Fine Art", says **Manuel Ludorff** (Düsseldorf), "...many find this very refreshing". Ludorff was able to sell a still life by Jawlensky and works by Warhol and Lyonel Feininger. "COFA Contemporary is an ideal supplement that bears fruit", according to **Andreas Binder** (Munich), who brokered works by Imi Knoebel and Georg Baselitz to a well-known collection. "You can rely on the Rhenish collector", noted **Dorothea van der Koelen**



Cologne Fine Art
18.11.-22.11.2015



COFA Contemporary
19.11.-22.11.2015

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(Mainz), who sold works by Uecker, Chillida and Lore Bert. She also positively evaluated the relations of the various styles and eras practiced at Cologne Fine Art, as well as the new COFA Contemporary: "That gives people ideas and provides impulses for synergy effects". **Wilfried Utermann** had similar experiences: "COFA Contemporary has a positive aura", says the Dortmund resident, who, in addition to paintings by Hann Trier, also sold a sculpture by Abraham David Christian for 44,000 Euro. Also "very successful" was **Klaus Benden** (Cologne), who found a buyer for Andy Warhol's 18-part portfolio '25 Cats named Sam' (150,000 Euro). The exhibitor of many years at both Cologne art fairs was also present at COFA Contemporary with a stand. "I am very enchanted with the idea of establishing an additional platform for contemporary art. The concept presents a chance for Cologne Fine Art."

"We experienced a very good response", **Bert Schlichtenmaier** (Grafenau) reported following a "very successful vernissage". He sold works by Adolf Fleischmann and Willi Baumeister in the high 5-digit range. **Alexander Baumgarte** (Bielefeld) was able to establish "new and interesting contacts" and find buyers for works by Sam Francis and Heinz Mack. He is in discussion with an interested party about a sculpture by Marino Marini for more than 2 million Euro. Antique dealer **Julian Schmitz-Avila** (Bad Breisig) was also "extremely satisfied". He was able to welcome many customers of long standing from the region at this stand and reach agreements on a number of trial orders for various pieces of furniture.

New exhibitors were also satisfied with their trade fair debuts: "I sold good pieces; there was a lot of interest in objects from the Gothic period and the Renaissance", stated new exhibitor **Remco van Leeuwen** (Eindhoven), who, among other items, sold a northern Italian box from the 14th century: "I want to find collectors here in the region, which is why I take part in Cologne Fine Art", according to van Leeuwen. **Lieblingsstuhl** (Zurich/Düsseldorf), another new participant, was impressed by the "competent, well-informed visitors", also including curators and representatives of various institutions. "The trade fair is at a good level", Hans-Joachim Röhrs confirmed.

The **Young Collector's Room**, a pavilion of Cologne Fine Art exhibitors established in 2014, was able to link with the success of the previous year. Paintings, photographs and graphic works were as much in demand here as African and Asian sculptures, Biedermeier furniture and design classics. The stand had to be restocked several times.

Many participants of the first COFA Contemporary in hall 11.2 were also satisfied with the course of the trade fair and the premiere of the new platform: for example, the gallery **Schönewald** (Düsseldorf), which sold works by Ricardo Saro and Bernd Ribbeck,

reported "active sales". "The supplementing of Cologne Fine Art with contemporary art is a really good thing", according to Sven Ahrens from the Cologne gallery **Hammelehle und Ahrens**. "We made use of the opportunity for brokering for two very special positions and were able to acquire customers for Andreas Rüthi and Ina Weber, who actually have a completely different approach to collecting". Ahrens praised "the attractive balance between Cologne Fine Art and COFA Contemporary. "COFA Contemporary got off to a good start. The mood is positive and we had a lot of interested parties at our stand", reported the Düsseldorf gallery owner **Samandar Setareh**, who was represented with stands in both sections. "For me, participation is a good chance to reach a broad public", said **Petra Martinetz** (Cologne), who registered a lot of interest for the Belgian artist Mary-Audrey Ramirez; "I received very good reactions to the stand". "When the Rhenish galleries invite, the Rhenish collectors come", **Martin Kudlek** (Cologne) was happy to ascertain. "Surprisingly good" were the sales of both artists Katrin Bremermann and Jonathan Callan. "At this trade fair one can also take risks and imagine positions that haven't been secured yet", says **Markus Lüttgen** (Cologne), "that makes the targeted promotion of young talent possible". Lüttgen was already able to sell both works by Erica Baum and the ceramics of the young artist Viola Relle at the vernissage. "COFA Contemporary offers me the welcome opportunity to present myself at an autumn trade fair", the Cologne gallery owner **Philipp von Rosen**, who presented a solo show with Koen van den Broek, was pleased to say. "The new platform has arrived in the city". The Mönchengladbach resident Christian **Löhrl** was equally successful with both sculptures by Stephan Balkenhol and paintings by Roman Kochanski. "Participation in the fair was fun", according to Löhrl. The clear structure of the offering concentrating on 40 participants was also evaluated positively: "Because COFA Contemporary has such a clear structure, we were able to have longer and more intensive discussions", according to **Berthold Pott** (Cologne); "...many customers, including from the Benelux countries, were at the stand. Thanks to the incorporation of the off rooms, one can also encounter artists at an early stage." For example, in the young Cologne project space **Mélange**, operated by Jonas Schenk and Patrick C. Haus: "We are pleased to have been integrated into the events of the trade fair and to have attracted positive attention here". Six works by the Dublin artist Joshua Sex were sold."

Distinction for Candida Höfer

The trade fair already experienced its first highlight at the vernissage with the conferring of the Cologne Fine Art prize to the Cologne artist Candida Höfer. The award and the special event with large format photos were positively received by visitors and the press. The Cologne Fine Art prize endowed with 10,000 Euro prize is conferred

jointly by Koelnmesse and the Bundesverband Deutscher Galerien und Kunsthändler
e.V. (BVDG/German Association of Galleries and Art Dealers).

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