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Press release
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Basel, 9 June 2024

Nikola Dietrich appointed new Artistic Director of Liste Art Fair Basel.

Stiftung Liste Basel has appointed Nikola Dietrich as the new artistic director of Liste Art Fair Basel on the recommendation of the search committee. She is returning to Basel after 10 years.



Photo: Mareike Tocha

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Nikola Dietrich (1972*) studied art history, modern German literature, and journalism in Munich and Berlin. From 2004 to 2007, Dietrich was a curator at Portikus in Frankfurt, and from 2008 to 2014 she served as Head of Contemporary Art at Kunstmuseum Basel/Gegenwart. From 2018 to 2023, Nikola Dietrich was the Director of the Kölnischer Kunstverein. She is currently curating KölnSkulptur #11 at Skulpturenpark Köln.

Nikola Dietrich will be leaving Cologne with her son to move to Basel. Her connection to Basel is not only professional; her son Francis was born in Basel and spent the first four years of his life there. The Stiftung Liste Basel is delighted to welcome this outstanding and internationally respected curator back to Basel as the Artistic Director of Liste Art Fair Basel.

The call for applications

Approximately 50 international applications were received in response to the call for submissions. After reviewing the dossiers, 10 candidates were invited to the first round of interviews, of which three advanced to the second round. Each applicant was required to outline their professional background, analyze Liste, and formulate their ideas for its continuation and further development.

Selection criteria

The criteria that were decisive for selecting the new director of Liste Art Fair Basel can be summarized as follows:

- Independent and courageously committed personality
- Profound knowledge of contemporary art
- Experience and familiarity with the art market and the needs of galleries
- International networking
- A feel for new developments
- Courage to be unconventional
- Business management knowledge and experience
- Experience in fundraising
- Organisational talent
- Leadership experience and good social skills

After extensive discussions and evaluations, Nikola Dietrich was unanimously recommended for election by the foundation's search committee. With her knowledge, experience, and strong, empathetic personality, Nikola Dietrich emerged as the ideal choice for this role. She possesses an exceptional ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of individuals and to earn their respect. She maintains close relationships with artists, institutions, collectors, and key figures in politics, business, and society. She has excellent knowledge and connections in related fields and is well networked internationally. Nikola Dietrich understands and values the unique position and role of Liste in the international art exhibition landscape. She is deeply committed to further developing Liste, preserving and nurturing its special spirit, and continually enhancing its uniqueness. This includes developing new funding models and fully dedicating herself to the promotion and discovery of galleries and their artists.

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The search committee

Dr Urs Gloor, President of Stiftung Liste Basel; Hedy Graber, Migros Genossenschaftsbund, Head of Social Affairs and Culture Department, Zurich and member of the foundation board; Bettina Steinbrügge, Director of Mudam Luxembourg; Nathalie Unternäher, member of the foundation board, Basel; Jan Kaps, gallery owner, Cologne; Alex Grossenbacher-Grisard, of the foundation board, Basel; Peter Bläuer, Artistic Director ad interim and member of the foundation board, Basel.

About Liste

Liste Art Fair Basel was founded in 1996 and was run for 23 years by co-founder Peter Bläuer, who developed it into one of the most renowned international fairs for promoting and discovering young art. In 2018, Joanna Kamm took over as director for five years. She introduced two new formats to Liste: Liste Showtime and Liste Expedition, and initially relocated the fair to Messe Basel's exhibition hall 1.1 due to the pandemic. Since 2022, Stiftung Liste Basel has been the owner of the fair. As a non-profit organization, Liste Art Fair Basel is dedicated to promoting and supporting young galleries. Joanna Kamm handed over the management of Liste at the end of 2023. Since then, Reto Nussbaum has served as Commercial Director, with Peter Bläuer as interim Artistic Director.

The future

Nikola Dietrich, the newly appointed Artistic Director, will assume her role on 1 September 2024. On behalf of the Stiftung Liste Basel, the new directorate will ensure the quality and further development of Liste Art Fair Basel. The directorate will also work to strengthen Basel as a cultural hub and develop new support models for young galleries and artists. The fair will continue to operate as a non-profit organization, adhering to strict quality criteria, and will offer new international galleries and their young artists the opportunity to participate in the fair for several years at favorable conditions. This approach will maintain the fair's status as an internationally significant platform for artists, art enthusiasts, museums, and collectors. The Stiftung Liste Basel is also pleased to announce the continued support of its long-standing main partners: E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers Basel, which has generously supported Liste since 1997, and Helvetia Insurance, which has been associated with the awarding of an art prize for the past 20 years.

Statements on the election

Urs Gloor (President of Stiftung Liste Basel): "We are fortunate to have found a leader who will guide Liste into the future with great flair and dedication. She understands the needs of young galleries, artists, and collectors from her own experience. As long as they are satisfied with what Liste has to offer, the fair will remain successful. The management of Liste must continue to identify new trends in art early on to stay attractive."

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Peter Bläuer: "I am extremely happy and confident in the choice of Nikola Dietrich. She truly understands what Liste is all about. I have known Nikola since her time in Basel, and we have always stayed in touch. I know how she thinks and acts and deeply appreciate her independent, strong personality. She is simply a great and strong woman, both sensitive and compassionate. However, she is also unafraid to take action, even when it is unpopular but necessary. I admire her curiosity, her passion, and her unwavering commitment when she believes in something. As the 'father' of Liste, I am delighted to see Nikola Dietrich leading Liste into the future. I wish her much joy and fulfillment in this new role!"

Nikola Dietrich: "Liste is a unique institution that has maintained its position as the world's leading contemporary art fair for nearly 30 years. It is a great pleasure and honor for me to build on its continued relevance and success in the ever-changing landscape of contemporary art while finding new ways to create quality and focused art encounters for all. I believe it is important to create an irreplaceable space where many different voices are heard, lively discourse and diverse experimental approaches occur, and artworks are presented that both promote the art market and foster a vibrant art community. I look forward to working with the Liste team to continue the valuable work of Joanna Kamm and Peter Bläuer in a city like Basel, which is more passionate about art than almost any other."

We are happy to answer any further questions or arrange interviews with Nikola Dietrich, Peter Bläuer, and Urs Gloor.

Important dates

Liste Art Fair Basel 2024

Preview: Monday, 10 June, 11 am – 6 pm

Opening: Monday, 10 June, 6–8 pm

Fair: Tuesday, 11 June – Sunday, 16 June

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 12–8 pm; Sunday, 11 am – 4 pm

Liste Showtime Online

showtime.liste.ch

Preview: Wednesday, 5 June – Sunday, 9 June

Public: Monday, 10 June – Sunday, 23 June

A link to access the preview will be sent out via email in early June.

Liste Expedition Online

expedition.liste.ch

Permanently accessible

Contact

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