Brand-New-Life
Magazin für Kunstkritik

www.brand-new-life.org
office@brand-new-life.org



Adieu Frieze d/e!

Barbara Preisig

After a five-year run, the magazine Frieze d/e will be discontinued. As a result of this, the German-speaking world is losing an influential art critical voice. Barbara Preisig talked to Mareike Dittmer, co-publisher of Frieze d/e, about Frieze’s consequential decision to from now on confine itself to English-language reporting.

frieze d/e

ZEITGENÖSSISCHE KUNST UND KULTUR
IN DEUTSCHLAND, ÖSTERREICH UND DER SCHWEIZ

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE
IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA UND SWITZERLAND

FRIEZE D/E NO. 25
HERBST / AUTUMN 2016



DOSSIER: KAI ALTHOFF

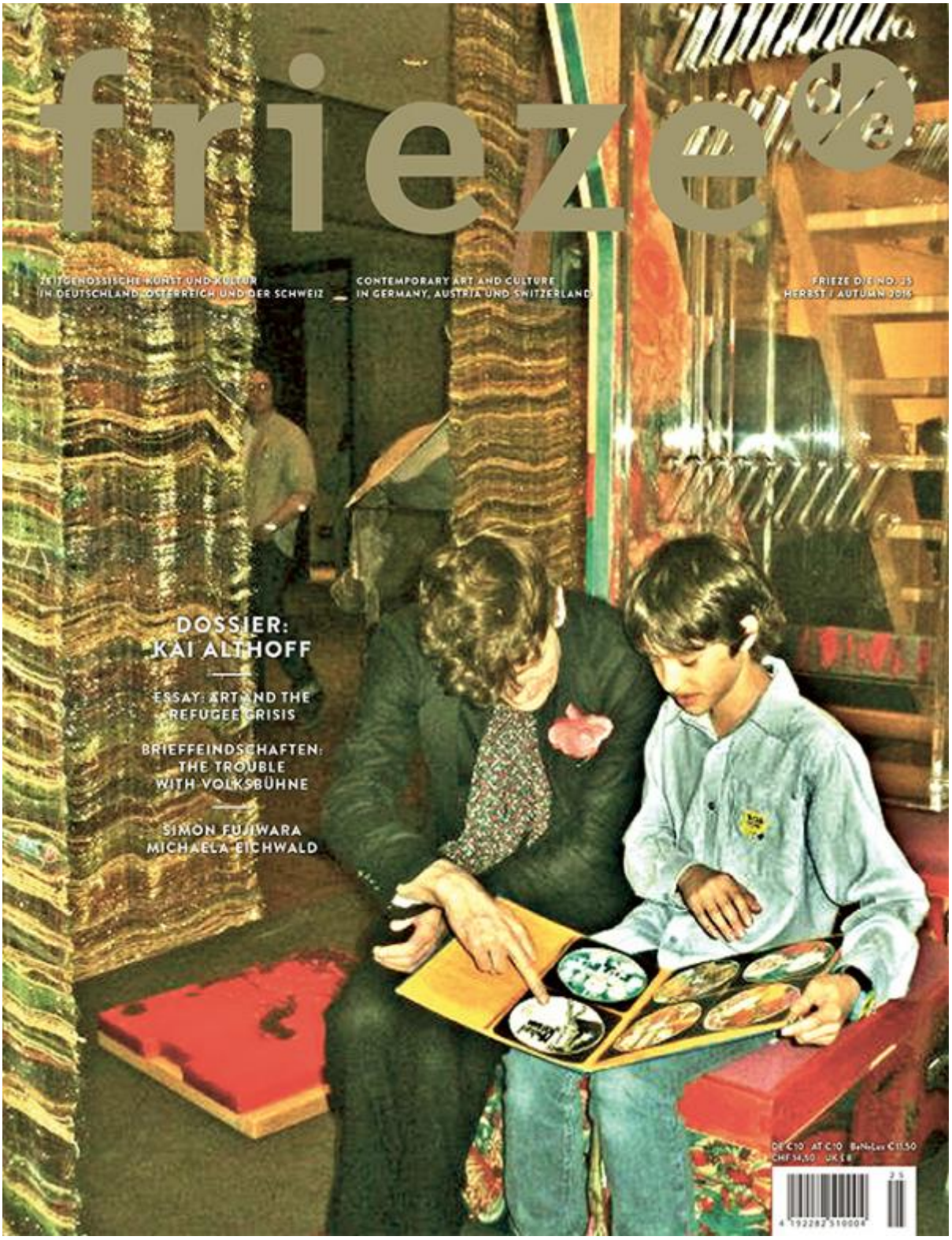
ESSAY: ART AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

BRIEFFEINDSCHAFTEN: THE TROUBLE WITH VOLKSBÜHNE

SIMON FUJIWARA
MICHAELA EICHWALD

DE € 10 AT € 10 BeNeLux € 11,50
CHF 14,50 UK £ 8

4 192282 510004 25



Frieze-d/e-Cover; last issue

Barbara Preisig: In 2011 Frieze d/e was launched with the aim to devote greater attention to the art scene in the German-speaking world than had previously been possible in the international edition of Frieze. Now Frieze d/e is being discontinued. What are the reasons for this?

Mareike Dittmer: Frieze d/e is being discontinued as an independent magazine, but we will take the contents and topics that were published in it until now into the pages of Frieze. This does not mean that we are not very proud of the many outstanding texts that have been published in Frieze d/e over the past five years – quite the opposite. However, it has become

even more clear to us than five years ago that art and its discourses will increasingly reference a globally networked world, and both we and our authors more and more often encountered the limits of Frieze d/e's regional focus. This is why the step was taken to share the specific contents with the larger, global readership of Frieze and Frieze.com.

Preisig: In what ways did the «limits of the regional focus» manifest themselves?

Dittmer: In the fact that there were often texts that we (and the authors) could have just as well, if not better, imagined in the international edition, that were missing in the discourse of Frieze and that due to the self-imposed restriction to the German-speaking world just didn't receive the kind of dissemination and relevance internationally we would have wished for.

Preisig: Today Frieze also runs two art fairs in London and New York, in addition to the magazine. Is the discontinuation of Frieze d/e related to a strategic realignment of Frieze (art fair and magazine)? Was Frieze d/e a long-term endeavor at all.

Dittmer: Frieze always had explicitly international aspirations and in this context Frieze d/e was, of course, an experiment, but the long-term perspective existed from the outset—starting with the Berlin office, which exists since 2001. Indeed, it is in light of this long-term perspective that we now made the decision to bring our international, national and regional contents together in one medium.

Preisig: With its November/December issue Frieze will double its exhibition reviews for the German-speaking countries. In what other ways will Frieze change as a result of the reintegration of Frieze d/e? What will be lost?

Dittmer: By doubling the reviews from the region, the German-speaking world will have a presence in the pages of Frieze similar to that of the United States and Great Britain. In addition, there will be more features and columns; we will discuss and analyze names and topics from the region and beyond, thereby underscoring and bolstering our presence in and commitment to the continent. And while we will, in fact, lose the German language in doing so, we hope that the advantage of the associated internationality will make up for this loss.

Preisig: By discontinuing the German-language magazine, Frieze supports the dominance of the English language in the art world. Wasn't Frieze d/e's aspiration precisely to counter this trend and seek local accessibility by being multilingual? To what extent has Frieze d/e failed in this aspiration?

Dittmer: In Frieze and at Frieze.com we will publish new and familiar voices from the region in translation—something we have done only rarely to date—, which will change the tone of the discourse and its systems of reference, while indeed acknowledging English as the lingua franca of the contemporary art world.

Preisig: What does this restructuring say about the current situation of art criticism in the German-speaking world? Is this language region already amply covered by art magazines?

Dittmer: I am not sure that it allows us to make such a general assumption. If we acknowledge that the status quo of art criticism in the German-speaking world is deeply embedded in an international discourse, then I do not think that this decision was about such a thing as "market saturation", but, rather, about deciding whether to operate in an essentially regional or a truly international way. In its very conception, Frieze d/e—its bilingualism, its international staff and networks—was just not designed to confine itself.

Preisig: The editorial team of Frieze d/e frequently had trouble finding good German-language authors. Why is that?

Dittmer: As I see it, part of the reason may be that in the Anglo-Saxon countries higher education puts greater stress on a particular form of entertaining analysis that avoids jargon. Essay writing as an important part of the curriculum as well as debate clubs are part of this tradition. In the German-speaking world, by contrast, pure factuality is what most commonly counts, while tone and style are not necessarily categories applied to scholarly writing.

Preisig: In what way does the target group change as a result of limiting reporting to English?

Dittmer: I hope we won't lose any of our readers! It is our hope that the majority of our present readership will accept the challenge to follow our coverage in English as well.

Preisig: What will you and the other members of the Frieze d/e Team do after the final issue? Will the Berlin office be retained?

Dittmer: The Berlin Frieze office will be retained. From there we will continue to pursue the expansion of our local and regional networks, in order to take topics from the region and beyond publish them in Frieze and at Frieze.com. The latter will also be one of my main tasks as Associate Publisher of Frieze. Pablo Larios will be the new Associate Editor and Jörg Heiser will be Editor at Large, while Christy Lange will continue to double as Curator of Public Programming and Associate Editor. And it is our hope that from now on we will increasingly have the opportunity to hear many of the familiar voices of independent authors in Frieze. Stay tuned.

BARBARA PREISIG

Barbara Preisig is an art historian and art critic whose research focuses on contemporary artistic practices and their social and political contexts. In exploring translocal, transdisciplinary, and nonacademic ways of writing and thinking, she addresses a range of subjects including artistic research, feminism, institutional studies, and the politics of authorship. Barbara Preisig is co-editor of Brand-New-Life.