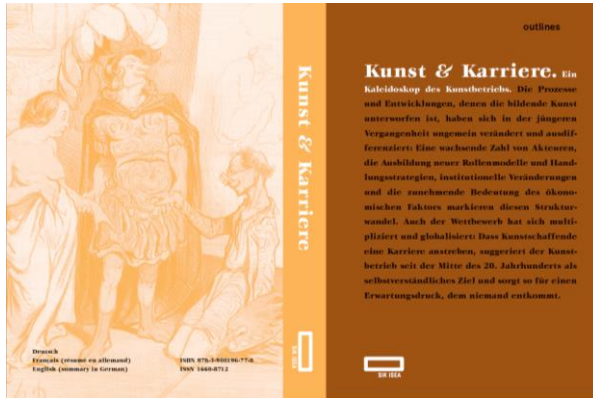


MEDIA RELEASE
Zurich, 7 July 2015



New publication:

Kunst & Karriere. Ein Kaleidoskop des Kunstbetriebs

Art and career might seem an oxymoronic pair, but even artists have to earn their bread. The myths that still shroud the pursuit of art tend to obscure that fact, but reality tells a different story. In today's art sector, harsher commodification and globalised competition have created a framework that obliges artists to keep coming up with new strategies. The latest publication from the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) paints a kaleidoscope of the art sector past and present, drawing on a selection of conference papers.

When Hans-Jörg Heusser retired in 2010, he had been at the helm of the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) since 1993. To mark the occasion and pay tribute to his work, the Institute organised an international symposium on a subject of particular interest to its long-standing managing director: the functioning of the art sector. The title «Art & Career» was chosen deliberately for the latitude it offered, eliciting a broad view of the conditions and processes which frame the fine arts and those who produce them. One focus is on today's art sector, which has undergone profound structural change in recent years as a result of economisation and globalisation. More and more players and institutions are stepping up the competition, thereby placing artists under further pressure. To be visible in the media and to succeed in a career, they need to keep devising new role models and action strategies. However, the art sector as we know it now is not simply a phenomenon of our own times, but can be detected in bygone eras of Western art history. Consequently, a number of talks during the symposium also cast light on its history.

The publication contains a selection of conference papers, covering a time line from the High Renaissance in Italy via the 18th century and the era of historical avant-gardes, down to the present day. Structured – like the cultural economy itself – around the themes of production, distribution, consumption and tradition, these essays address such wide-ranging questions as the influence of potential art collectors on the future careers of the artists they collect, the literature that promises good advice for artists setting out on a career, and the jargon adopted by contemporary writing designed to convey art to an audience. A critical look is taken at the event culture so typical of the art sector under capitalism and at how art can be instrumentalised as national propaganda or as a medium to express corporate interests. Case studies of Thomas Gainsborough, Carle Vernet, Tracey Emin and Kurt Schwitters examine how artists go about asserting an image or position they have defined for themselves. Titian and Caravaggio, and the archiving of posthumous papers in artists' fonds, serve to illustrate the mechanisms by which legacies are passed on to posterity.



SIK ISEA

Publication data

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