

# ART

COLLECTOR

## MELBOURNE ART FAIR

SPECIAL ISSUE

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## FROM BERLIN TO SYDNEY

**CARRIE MILLER** INTERVIEWS LEADING BERLIN DEALER **MATTHIAS ARNDT** TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS BEHIND THE RATHER SURPRISING DECISION TO OPEN A POP-UP SPACE IN SYDNEY.

It's not often that something genuinely innovative happens in the Australian art world, but the opening of a pop-up art show where there's museum quality international art for sale certainly fits the bill.

The show *Migration* was produced by internationally renowned gallerist **Matthias Arndt**, owner and director of Arndt in Berlin, Germany, and his Australian wife **Tiffany Wood**, who has 20 years' experience in prestige international auction houses and galleries.

The couple are now based here and Arndt plans to build a substantial presence over the long term in the local contemporary art scene. Moreover, against the view that Australians tend to only buy local art, he believes that there is a genuine collector base for international art of the quality and value on show at *Migration*. The exhibition includes works by major artists such as **Joseph Beuys** and **Georg Baselitz**, as well as by those recognised in their own regions including China, Eastern Europe, South East Asia, South America, Africa and the Middle East, with a price range of \$6,000 to \$500,000.

Arndt certainly has the qualifications for prosecuting such an ambitious agenda. He played a pioneering role in the Berlin contemporary art scene as the first West German to open a contemporary art gallery in East Berlin after unification. Now, after being at the centre of one of contemporary art's main hubs over the past decade, he's positioning himself in Australia where he is able to capitalise on the rise of new Asian art markets while living here and developing his business locally.

Arndt purposefully chose the pop-up model rather than a conventional shopfront for his first Australian exhibition because of the flexibility it gives both him and the artists he exhibits. For Arndt, the considerable expense and time it took to fit out an unrenovated space was worth it as the pop-up concept is in keeping with his overall plan to show work in a way which allows maximum flexibility both for artists and collectors. As he explains: "The art market is globalised and so the conventional gallery model no longer works for representing artists in every context. Artists require different things from



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**"The conventional gallery model no longer works for representing artists in every context. Artists require different things from a gallerist now."**

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a gallerist now. They may want an agent or sometimes they perhaps want someone to handle just one body of work."

By not tying himself to a traditional white cube model of operation, Arndt will be able to offer a more dynamic exhibition program, including plans for more pop-up shows, along with focused artist projects. It's not, then, simply because of his high profile status but because of his genuinely innovative approach and serious dedication to the critical as well as commercial aspects of art that makes Arndt such a significant addition to the local scene. •

*Migration continues until 10 July 2012 at 9 Jenkins Street, Sydney.*

Matthias Arndt in the *Migration* exhibition with, from left to right, works by Neo Rauch, Georg Baselitz, Nick Cave, George Condo and Geraldine Javier. PHOTO: NEW ERA MEDIA