



Berlin Barter

Favours. That's what the people of Berlin will exchange for art, from the tempting to the perplexing. At Alix Janta, Lauren Jones and Charlotte Friling's Art Barter event in Berlin, guests were encouraged to make pledges in return for the chance of a piece of art by luminaries including John Isaacs, Jeremy Shaw and many other big and emerging names (the debut event in London last year included works by Tracey Emin, Gavin Turk and Mat Collishaw). Sex was a prominent theme on the offers scribbled on chits pinned to the wall next to the gallery. For instance: "one year of bio pizza and tantra massage with or without a happy end"; "a night with me"; "myself"; and then just the more prosaic (and très Berlin), "sex."

Alternative, and perhaps less attractive, offers included "an 'okay' acoustic guitar", "a catered picnic for 8", and "a size-12 pair of Vans". There was the chance of "a three course meal", next to which was pinned an upstaging offer of "a four-course meal". Here's the thing: at Art Barter, you show up, check the art, make a pledge and you could be lucky (and with offers like those, so could an artist.)

"The Art Barter event revolves around the idea that artworks have always been acquired by individuals through alternative means to money," said the handout. There's a catch: "you will not know which artwork belongs to which

artist until after the show's end." The art of intrigue and suspense, indeed...

The paintings, sculptures, videos and photography proved popular among Berlin's demimonde and the event was successful: 400 people turned up at the opening night at. HBC, a former Hungarian cultural centre near Alexanderplatz with a cinema where you can smoke. Reading the pledges alone was an arty, liberating experience that affirmed Life.

Life and art – they're all about give and take, aren't they?

Words by Kevin Braddock

www.artbarter.co.uk

Image above: Chin Up (Margo Stilley in Mustique), Kate Bellm.

All artist images courtesy of Art Barter except for John Kleckner's which is courtesy of Peres Projects.





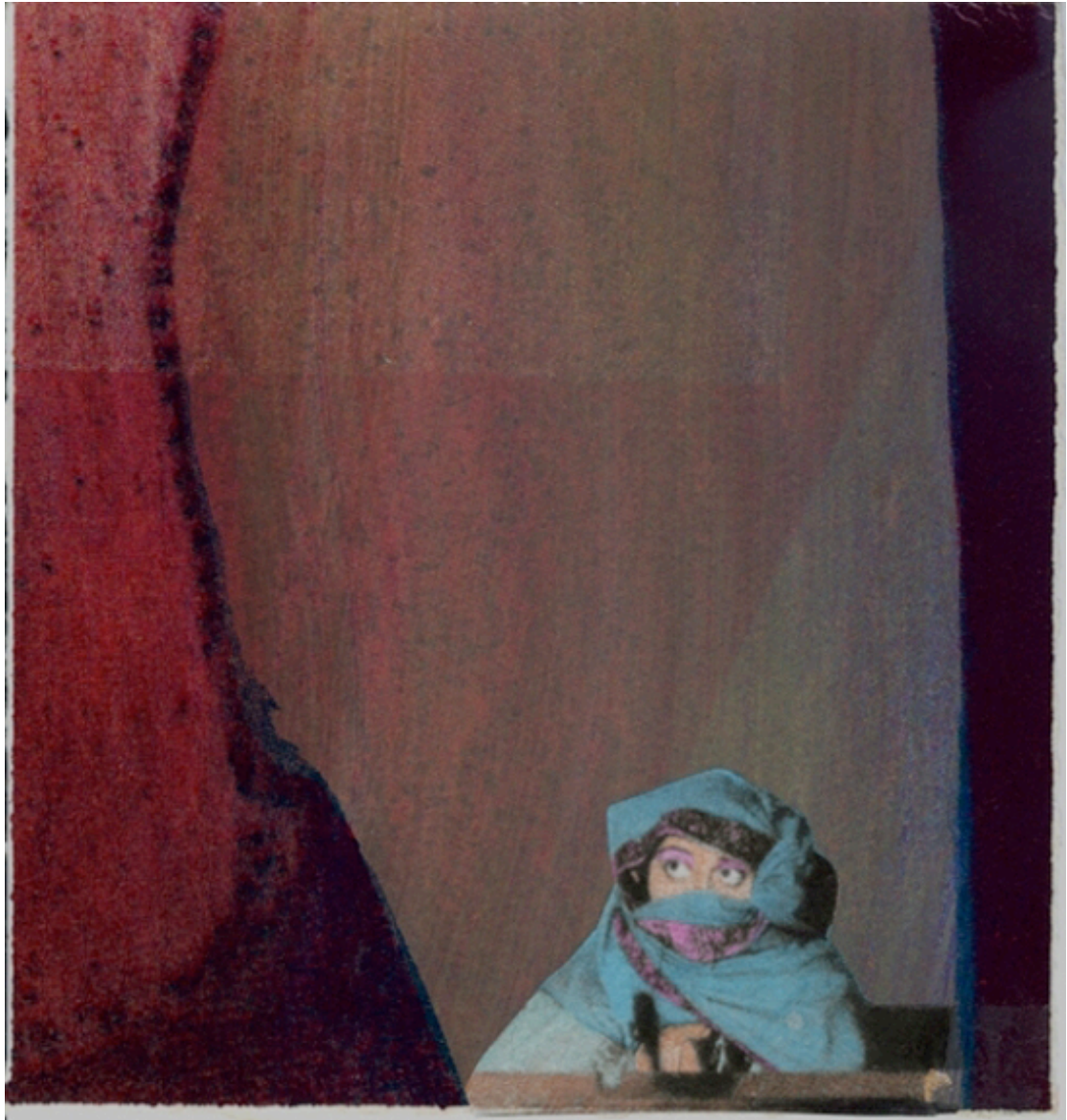
Art Barter organisers, from left to right: Lauren Jones, Alix Janta, Charlotte Friling. ©Johan Delétang.



Dissolution, Wolfgang Ganter.



Untitled (For D.H.), John Kleckner



Tuchwelt/Commentary, Haralampi Oroschakoff.