

We have to value what's casual and confounding. Commercial spaces like Giti Nourbakhsch's feel necessary precisely because the shows sometimes seem like home experiments. Dutch Berliner Joep van Liefland's show at Guido Baudach opened with the enormous gallery full of signs for the artist's "Video Palace," but van Liefland was nowhere to be seen. He was parked out back in a van, regaling the crowd with a fridge of beer and a video of a wild boar being slaughtered. (Another night to remember was the annual Oktoberfest at Autocenter, an exhibition space van Liefland and fellow artist Maik Schierloh run in the eastern district of Friedrichshain. Truly independent, they don't clamber to seize the center but simply run amok with programming how and when they want it.) Meanwhile, artist Josef Strau's Galerie Meerrettich, in a tiny glass house beside the Volksbuhne, looks better than ever. Julian Gothe built a jagged screen for a video (made with Antje Stoffler-Hamad) that conflates nostalgia, theater, and design with mesmerizing slow pans over production stills and superimposed Spirographs, all assembled with economy and poise. In the early summer, a huge crowd gathered to watch Paulina Olowska and friends on the roof performing an alphabet of full-body poses (with roots in Czech modernism) before spinning out into a yoga of words.