

More Dust Covers / Book fair

“Dust cover,” an English term that is commonly used in German as well, describes a detachable cover printed on glossy paper for first, and usually hardcover, editions of new books. One factor behind the rise of the dust jacket was the growth of the railway station bookshop business in the 1940s: loud colors and advertising messages on the cover were designed to target travelers who had to make a choice in a hurry.

Baldischwyler’s installation mostly consists of “travesties” of actual dust covers painted on a classical support medium—canvas—in portrait and landscape formats. Alterations to the original titles make for commentarial updates, as with the German edition of Jack Kerouac’s “The Dharma Bums” or the cover of the original edition of Geoffrey Household’s “Rogue Male.” Other pictures imagine the glossy covers of books that were never published, such as Hugo Ball’s 1910 dissertation “Nietzsche in Basel.”

Baldischwyler thus blends the semblance of “applied” art with a reflection on the potential indiscriminateness of today’s “research-based” art—the practice of a generation of young artists who use pieces from the history of modernism as building blocks and seek to reassess its influence on contemporary discourse. Does appropriation inevitably mean that written records are yanked out of their historical contexts and degraded by fetishization?

On occasion of the exhibition, Textem Verlag, Hamburg, will bring out a book documenting selected flyers and posters with drawings and collages Baldischwyler created for various off spaces and music clubs in Hamburg between 2000 and 2013. The book will be published in a limited edition of 300 stamped and numbered copies.