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From left: Lauren Jones, Alix Janta, and Art Barter Berlin cocurator Charlotte Frilling at the Berlin show.

Swap Meet

By Jenny Comita

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What do a kidney, a threesome, a luxurious vacation, and three months of psychotherapy have in common? All have been offered as tender at Lauren Jones and Alix Janta's Art Barter events. Frustrated by sky-high prices, curators Jones, 26, and Janta, 29, envisioned shows at which underfunded aesthetes could pay with anything except money. Their first event, in November 2009 in London, mixed pieces by stars like Tracey Emin, Tim Noble & Sue Webster, and Mat Collishaw with works sourced from art-school exhibitions—all of which were installed without attribution. "We were inspired by a show at the Royal College of Art that offered anonymous postcards by both very famous and unknown artists," says Jones. "Everyone had a chance to buy them for a low price, but you didn't find out whose you were getting until afterward." The London event's success led Jones and Janta to mount a follow-up in Berlin this past June, and they'll debut the concept Stateside on December 9, at New York's Envoy Enterprises. Featuring Terence Koh, Lola Schnabel, and Asger Carlsen, among others, the show will be open to the public, and anyone can bid, although the artists ultimately decide whether the offerings are enticing enough to persuade them to part with their work. In London and Berlin, more than half the pieces were successfully bartered, with Collishaw swapping his *Insecticide Photogravure* (2008) for a weeklong stay for two at a posh retreat in the French countryside and recent Central Saint Martins grad Lora Hristova exchanging a photograph for the aforementioned psychotherapy. But the kidney, not surprisingly, was a no-go. "I don't think they were serious," says Janta. "But our bidders do sign a contract, so they're taking a big chance. I wouldn't mind having a kidney on hold!"

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