1945–1960

“We’re from Stuttgart? My publisher, Hatje, lives there. Do you know him? He makes beautiful books.” Marc Chagall, in an interview

Everything starts with a grand passion for books and art. In 1945 the-then-30-year-old typesetter Gerd Hatje receives one of the highly desirable publishing licenses from the French-American military government.

Thirsty for knowledge and starved by the Nazi regime’s eradication of intellectual and cultural opportunities, Hatje is finally able to his build own “private university,” as he described it, according to his own lights. Under the imprint of Humanitas Verlag, novellas, novels, and pieces of world literature are printed on the thin paper typical of the post-war period, albeit “con amore.”

In 1947 the ambitious new company begins operating under the name Verlag Gerd Hatje and soon acquires considerable renown in the slowly evolving West German publishing scene.

By the 1950s the enthusiastic young entrepreneur has discovered the themes that remain the heart of the company’s books to this very day: the fine arts, modern architecture, and international design.
1961–1989

“When Joseph Beuys wants to produce a catalogue, he goes to Cantz.” Stuttgarter Zeitung

The 1960s are influenced by Hatje's friendships with many of the era's internationally known, avant-garde artists, architects, and art historians. These fertile connections result in great standard works on Art Nouveau, Dada, Surrealism, Cubism, and architecture, as well as in the Hatje classics on and with Le Corbusier, Alberto Giacometti, and Henri Matisse.

Collaborations with other publishers, such as Harry N. Abrams in New York or Thames & Hudson in London, underscore the international direction of the very busy art and architecture publishers located in Bad Cannstatt, near Stuttgart.

At the same time, the Dr. Cantz’sche Druckerei—founded in 1933 by Dr. Hugo Cantz and headed up by his son, Walter, after the war—was becoming one of the region’s leading printers for artists. With Fritz Hartmann, the company’s managing executive in the early 1970s, Walter Cantz is able to realize his dream of printing the highest quality art books possible.

After their books were printed at the Cantz’sche Druckerei, though, artists wanted to find their books in bookstores, and this ultimate led the printing company to start the edition cantz imprint. This opens up a promising new field of activity, thanks to the booming market for art books and catalogues in the 1980s.
1990–1998

“Happy is the artist accepted into her program . . . Despite her duties as a chronicler, she has never lost her eye for courageous books—Hatje Cantz has turned itself into the strongest brand on the market for contemporary art books.” Monopol, on Annette Kulenkampff

In 1990, at the age of 75, Gerd Hatje decides to sell his company. He ultimately comes to an agreement with Arthur Grunder, owner of J. Fink Holding.

In 1980 both Hatje and J. Fink become partners in the Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, providing financial support for the printing company's expansion. By that time Hatje and the Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei have been business partners for years.

For Gerd Hatje—who whose list “is one of the outstanding achievements in publishing in the twentieth century, thanks to its continuity, undogmatic vigor, and quality,” as the Tagesanzeiger wrote, this is a consequential step, and the publisher commented upon it: “Going into partnership with this very good printer, I primarily have the feeling that I am actually going back to my roots.”

At first the Verlag Gerd Hatje and the edition cantz imprint carry on independently of one another. In October 1995 the art historian Annette Kulenkampff takes over the program planning for both houses. With her expert knowledge, international contacts, and experience in the art world, she gives new impetus to the lists of both imprints.
1990–1998

The first joint catalogue—published under the somewhat awkward name of Verlagsgemeinschaft Hatje Cantz—demonstrates what two competent partners have to offer: significant new releases on classic modernism, old art, cultural history, contemporary art, photography, new media, typography, design, and architecture.

In 1998 Hatje Cantz Verlag takes over the renowned belser kunst quartal, an international, quarterly exhibition calendar founded in 1965, featuring more than 4000 up-to-date entries. Through the KQ Kunstquartal Hatje Cantz is able to go beyond its book list to present itself as an important mediator in the art and exhibition market.
1999–2003

“… the famed publishing house, renowned for the quality of its art monographs and exhibition catalogues … ” Süddeutsche Zeitung

The next step follows in 1999: under the leadership of Annette Kulenkampff, the Hatje Cantz Verlag GmbH & Co. KG is founded. Finally, lists are released under the auspices of one imprint.

Collaborations with museums—from the large, German-language institutions to the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in New York—are intensified and international distribution is reinforced.

Aside from its classic backlist of nearly eight hundred titles, the company releases small numbers of exclusive editions, photographic works, prints, and multiples under the Collector’s Editions label. Here, the close and trusting collaborations with artists are productively reflected.

Its support of contemporary art is in accordance with the firm’s long years of tradition. When Gerd Hatje published Picasso’s *Suite Vollard* in 1956, the first monograph on Andy Warhol in 1970, and Christo’s *Valley Curtain* in 1973, it showed his extraordinary commitment. This enthusiasm for new, as-yet-undiscovered art continues to define the Hatje Cantz concept.
1999–2003

The company’s thirty-five employees, whose professional sense of commitment makes these many ambitious projects possible, contribute considerably to the company’s international reputation.

Among them is Gerd Hatje, who is still to be found in his office every day from eight a.m. to twelve p.m. Here, he can foster his lifelong passion, which became the company’s calling card: producing art books of the very highest quality.
2004–2007

“It seems that no other art book publisher in Germany produces more outstanding catalogues with such a large international purview.” Kunstzeitung

In late 2004 the company begins thinking about a new logo and corporate design, as well as expanding its goals. The blue-and-red company logo still reflects the merger of the two publishers, Hatje and Cantz, in 1999. But the two houses and the list have long been completely fused under the direction of Annette Kulenkampff.

The new black-and-white logo designed by Christian Boros combines the old with the new, picking up on traditional directions while simultaneously reinforcing the position of the company’s brand. As ever, the books stand for quality, accuracy, and the love of art. Competence, commitment, and curiosity about art determine the diversity and direction of the product lines.

2005 is a special year for the publishing company. Gerd Hatje celebrates his ninetieth birthday; he and Annette Kulenkampff—who by then has been head of the company for more than ten years and is in charge of the list—are able to look back together upon sixty years of success. During those decades Hatje Cantz had become the “frontrunner in the catalogue market” (Buchmarkt) and one “of the most important publishers of art books.” (Kunstzeitung).
2004–2007

In the autumn of 2006 the publishing house expands, establishing a branch in Berlin with Dr. Cristina Steingräber in charge of its management. When the art and architecture historian joins the company, the architecture list is expanded to include many volumes on classic modern and contemporary architecture. New publications containing up-to-date research on urban studies round out the list.

On July 24, 2007, the publisher Gerd Hatje dies at the age of 92. With him goes one of the most important personalities of the postwar art and publishing scene in West Germany. With his “irrepressible thirst for knowledge” he followed all of the current developments in art, architecture, music, and literature—“always on the way, open-minded, combustible, enthusiastic, yet always with a critical, independent intellect . . . . We will miss all of this, but much of what he has created will remain with us, even after we are gone—the books, the spirit of Modernism, the upright attitude of the Enlightenment.” (Quoted from the eulogy given by Uwe M. Schneede at the memorial for Gerd Hatje on September 15, 2007, at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.)
2008–2010

"Like many of the major international art book publishers, Germany’s Hatje Cantz, which has been around since 1945 . . . produces far more than just photography titles . . . Hatje Cantz is among the publishers who are creating some of the most interesting books." PDN

In the meanwhile Hatje-Cantz books can be found in nearly every country in the world. Over the past ten years global distribution has expanded, and our books now present in the most important bookstores in Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia. Supported by ten distribution partners and seventeen publisher’s representatives around the world, our books are delivered to 52 countries.

From the start, it has been important to us that the content, design, and materials of each and every one of our books stand up to any kind of scrutiny. Our book projects now tend toward increasingly elaborate design, which relies upon individuality, tactile and visual features, and high-quality materials. So we are very pleased that our books are regularly awarded book prizes and special distinctions. There have been 31 awards between 2008 and 2011 alone.

In 2008 we develop two new series of titles, Art for Reading and Art for Listening. These supplement the classic art book in entertaining and ambitious ways. Art for Reading comprises biographies of important artists or literary texts by renowned contemporary authors inspired by art. Art for Listening features illustrated volumes with audio CDs of original audio guides and the most significant objects and pictures from individual exhibitions. This innovative product idea is honored with the 2011 Ort der Ideen prize.
In fall 2010 it is decided that Hatje Cantz—after participating in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Documenta exhibitions—will also publish an extensive series of books for the dOCUMENTA (13). With a series of 100 Notebooks, several art books, two extensive exhibition catalogues, and a short guide, this huge event in the art world is only one example of how important it is to have close and trusting collaborations among the producers, the artists, and the publishers, so that, in the end, all of the books are all of high quality and ready for presentation at the opening.
2011—Today

“Hatje Cantz […] is a big game hunter in the jungle of the art world. The publishing house gathers together our contemporary sphere of images and ideas in wonderful art books.”
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

The first few months of 2011 brings the most upheaval in the company's history. On February 8, 2011, J. Fink Holding has to declare insolvency. As a complete subsidiary of Fink, Hatje Cantz is also affected, despite its own economically solid situation.

In record time, however Annette Kulenkampff succeeds in finding a new home for the publishing company. On June 1, 2011, the Ganske Verlagsgruppe of Hamburg takes over the art book publishers in Ostfildern, guaranteeing that the company will continue to operate as usual out of Stuttgart and Berlin, retain all of its employees, and carry on with its normal program.

By acquiring Hatje Cantz, Ganske expands their portfolio of companies in the fields of art, design, and photography, having already been an influential presence there for years with their mail-order book services, Frölich & Kaufmann and Artservice, as well as with the Zeitschrift A&W Architektur & Wohnen (Magazine A&W, Architecture and Living).
2013 begins with a sea change: Annette Kulenkampff and Markus Hartmann leave Hatje Cantz.

After starting in the international field of distribution and program planning, Markus Hartmann became program director, and with his infallible eye for quality and close contacts to fine arts photographers, he contributed considerably to the development and high quality of the company’s photography division.

Annette Kulenkampff, who takes on a new position as managing director of the documenta and the Museum Fridericianum Veranstaltungs-GmbH, had spent eighteen years full of an infectious passion for art, shaping the profile of Hatje Cantz with carefully selected, ambitious programs. Under her leadership the company expanded into a globally respected, dynamic, and prosperous publisher of fine arts, photography, and architecture books.

A good foundation for a successful future. In July 2013 Dr. Cristina Steingräber succeeds Annette Kulenkampff as president and publisher. After stints as a curator at the National Gallery in Berlin, and as head of the publications department at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the art historian with a PhD took over international office in Berlin in 2006 and has been expanding it ever since.
Two other professionals support the new head of the company with their knowledge and skill in maintaining and expanding the lists: Ulrike Ruh, who spent more than sixteen years managing the architecture and design division at Birkhäuser in Basel, most recently as program director; and Martin Wichert, who was head of distribution and marketing at Hatje Cantz from 1998 to March 2014, and in this capacity had already been a participant in program development and strategic planning.

Two experts—Nadine Barth, renowned publicist, gallery owner, and curator; and Elisabeth Roosens, a program and publishing director with experience in photography and cultural history—are also consulting editors for the company.