

VENUS

MANHATTAN LOS ANGELES

ARTFORUM

Deep Frieze

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Left: Dealer Nicholas Logsdail. Right: Dealer Agnieska Rayzacher, artist Nalalia LL, and curator Alison Gingeras. (All photos: Linda Yablonsky)

THE GREAT GIFT Frieze London bestowed on art aficionados this year was to propel them into galleries and museums.

Not that Frieze itself didn't offer benefits. Female artists were notable for their quantity and, in the case of a special section curated by Alison Gingeras, historical impact as well as stick-it-in-your-face, pro-sex feminism. In the age of Trump the Aggressor, that's risky business. It may not be entirely profitable business, but it is, at least, desirable.

The fair also had an especially good program of talks put together by the estimable Ralph Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery, who no doubt welcomed the task while his museum undergoes extensive renovations.

But if you wanted to be absorbed by art, or cozy up to it unmolested by surging crowds and deafening chatter, then you ventured to the institutions beyond Regent's Park.



Left: Artists George Passmore and Gilbert Prousch (aka Gilbert & George). Right: Dealer Johann König.

In other cities—New York is one—fairs and exorbitant rents are pinching the gallery ecosystem, and while they've taken a toll here too, dealers are also establishing or expanding beachheads in increasing number. (Brexit be damned.)

In other words, London is hot. London is healthy. And Frieze London is the sparkplug that sends its art world into overdrive.

The eve of the fair's VIP preview offered nearly as many options as there were people taking them, as galleries north, south, and east opened exhibitions to meet every taste.

Stuart Shave's Modern Art introduced a second venue—the dealer's "six-thousand square-foot project space"—in the former Wilkinson Gallery on Vyner Street, with a three-part show by the clearly maturing Josh Kline. Appropriately titled "Civil War," it addressed the consequences of our current economic divide by balancing the rubble of class war with its spoils and forcing together high- and low-end appliances in the manner of a Koonsian Split-Rocker.

Thanks to traffic in London, where (as one cabbie noted) it's always rush hour, I missed Haroon Mirza's installation at the Zabłudowicz Collection, the Idris Khan opening at Victoria Miro, the blast of performances at KOKO bidding farewell to the David Roberts Art Foundation's Camden home, and the Douglas Gordon opening at Gagosian Britannia Street.



Left: Artists George Passmore and Gilbert Prousch (aka Gilbert & George). Right: Dealer Johann König. As it was, I had to hire a car even to get around Mayfair, which really had it going on.

Jake and Dinos Chapman continue their romance with Goya and contemporary violence at Blain|Southern, their new gallery in London. In his first outing at Gagosian Grosvenor Hill, Brice Marden hung by the door while friends and fans from New York and London took in the unashamed beauty of ten new paintings in his terre verte series.

From there I could walk around the corner to the Almine Rech outpost, where Berlin dealer Aurel Scheibler was showing Bernard Picasso the Ernst Wilhelm Nay abstractions from the 1960s and earlier. I also footed it downstairs to see salacious drawings by Tom Wesselmann, whose female objects of desire were also objectified in a show at Gagosian Davies Street, hard by the T.J. Wilcox video portraits at Sadie Coles.

Continuing the sweep of American artists in London, Sherrie Levine took up the David Zwirner townhouse for a variety of appropriations, including new monochromes that distilled the colors of van Gogh's sunflower paintings. These were very cool, though perhaps not quite as cool as Rirkrit Tiravanija's show at Pilar Corrias, whose gallery featured an impressive, overscaled steel cast of a Victorian oven that the artist used to cook a medieval stew consumed in his bucolic new video—and also served to game dinner guests at Carousel. "It's delicious, I promise you," said Corrias.

But the biggest winner that night was at the London branch of Lévy Gorvy, which somehow pulled together all twenty-three of the room-swallowing, multipanel drawings that comprised *The General Jungle* or *Carrying on Sculpting*, the 1971 exhibition (and maybe still their best) by Gilbert & George at the Sonnabend Gallery in New York. This was the drawings' first showing in the artists' hometown, and the duo appeared very pleased. "So nice to see it all again," said Gilbert, with a giggle.



Left: Kunsthalle Basel director Elena Filipovic. Right: Accessories designer Monica Zwirner and dealer David Zwirner.

So, if the art horde converges on London for Frieze, it's not so much about the fair. But everyone goes anyway. Dealers at Wednesday morning's preview had to brace for an onslaught. During my own first minute in the chaotic tent, I was treated to conversations with Tate director Maria Balshaw, collector Maria Baibakova, artist Cerith Wyn Evans, and filmmaker John Waters, before diving headlong into the maw of the most scattershot Frieze to date.

Not that anyone ever thought a fair was good for the integrity of art. It's good for galleries, and even better for connecting with other people. "I'm convinced that I'm doing something meaningful," said a wistful Anton Kern, who brought only paintings and sculpture by the women on his gallery's roster. "And then I get to a fair and it's all so social. It's good, I guess, in the end."

Yep. It was an hour before I got past the galleries clustered near the entrance, where a tall, Ugo Rondinone bluestone figure announced the stand for Sadie Coles. A spruced-up and supercharged Johann König, yet another dealer opening a branch in London, scheduled a daily changeover of his booth with a different solo presentation for the run of the fair. "We're having an especially splendid day," reported dealer Maureen Paley, whose wares included a video by the white-hot, Abraj Art Prize-winning Lawrence Abu Hamdan bought by the Frieze Tate Fund. "This is the most international Frieze we've seen yet," noted Max Hetzler, who has galleries in Berlin and Paris but not in London (yet). "I mean success no longer depends on dollars."



Left: Delfina Foundation director Aaron Cezar. Right: Dealer Sylvia Kouvali, artist Christodoulos Panayiotou, and Fiorucci Art Trust director Milovan Farronato.

Back to art. Sculpture by Amalia Pica and Michael Dean at the Herald St stand, and a provocative Thomas Bayrle collage in the theater of Gavin Brown's booth each stopped my progress to the far-off quarters housing Gingeras's "Sex Work: Feminist Art & Radical Politics."

Here, the walls were pink and penises vied with vulvas among the dozen galleries showcasing explicit, own-it imagery by now senior women who were castigated or marginalized for making it in previous decades.

Marilyn Minter's porn paintings of the nineties, for example, from Baldwin Gallery (and later crotch paintings from Salon 94 and Regen Projects), still bothered some people, who revisited the tired old antifeminist feminism argument of the '80s. So did the closely observed phalluses of Betty Tomkins (Galerie Andrea Caratsch). Other grazers marveled at expository self-portrait collages by Penny Slinger (Blum & Poe).

"I love this work," gushed MoMA curator Laura Hoptman over the Dorothy Iannones at Air de Paris. Dealer David Lewis scored by selling a Mary Beth Edelman spread to Tate Modern. I wished that the tactile and progressive Birgit Jürgenssen works at Hubert Winter were getting more of the attention they deserved, but was rather amazed to see a photo grid of gender stereotypes by another Austrian artist, Renate Bertlmann (presented by Richard Saltoun) that anticipated Cindy Sherman's "film stills" by nearly a decade. Another discovery came at Warsaw's Lokal 30, where the carnal photography of Natalia LL lost nothing in the translation from Polish.

Aggressive though this section was (especially for men), it might better have suited Frieze Masters, where the secondary market reigns supreme. Likewise the Hauser & Wirth booth, which could have been the gift shop for the Concorde, were it still flying one-percenters over the Atlantic.

The gallery worked with classicist Mary Beard to create "BRONZE AGE c. 3500 BC – AD 2017," replete with small bronzes by big names and fictive ones, because it could. (The booth's gift shop raised roughly \$13,000 for UK regional museums.) This was a little too Disney for my taste, though it was so crowded with art tourists that I couldn't actually get in.

So I went to Masters, where soft lighting, carpeting, and spacious aisles provide a more user-friendly ambience. The always industrious, Bologna-based P420 Gallery, in the Spotlight section, literally glowed with neon "subway" paintings (1966–68) by the ripe-for-rediscovery Laura Grisi. Once a core artist in the Leo Castelli Gallery, the paintings skirt the edges of Process Art and Arte Povera without resting in either.

Venus Over Manhattan brought back tire works from the late Colin de Land's John Dogg (aka Richard Prince) exhibition at American Fine Arts in 1986. (One collector bought a piece without knowing what it was.) And Alexander Gray hung 1950s abstract paintings by the legendary dealer Betty Parsons, who started out as a student of Alberto Giacometti.



Left: Serpentine Gallery curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, dealer Pilar Corrias, and artist Koo Jeong A. Right: Dealer Casey Kaplan.

That's as far as I got before closing. Not that the clock stopped for recounting the pleasures of the past. At the Store on the Strand, a former office building turned exhibition and performance space by the Vinyl Factory, dealer Nicholas Logsdail was celebrating his fiftieth anniversary in the business with "Everything at Once," an exhibition of fifty large-scale works by twenty-four gallery artists—Lawrence Weiner, Ai Weiwei, Marina Abramović, Nathalie Djurberg, Richard Long, Cory Arcangel, Susan Hiller, and Anish Kapoor among them.

How does an astute person make an impact throughout five decades of shifting paradigms and prejudices in the art world? "Never give up," the stoic Logsdail said. "It doesn't get easier, but it does get bigger." Kapoor, who has been showing with the gallery for nearly three of those decades, agreed. "Nicholas struggled for twenty-five years," he said. "It's hard here in London for a gallery to maintain a space where artists are free to be themselves and do whatever they want. But he did it."

After a few hours' sleep, I taxied with dealer Sylvia Kouvali to Kingston University's Stanley Picker Gallery on Richmond Park. Here, gallery program director Stella Bottai led about a dozen sleepy-eyed diehards to The Hollow of Your Hand, a sound piece by Christodoulos Panayiotou in the private Picker House, a perfectly preserved example of 1960s architecture with an interior designed by Terence Conran.

It included a hi-fi on which an assistant played vinyl recordings chosen or made by the artist while he and the rest of us stood around and listened. (The sofas were off-limits.) It was an odd, and oddly mournful, program that progressed from a scratchy old record from the Picker collection to a doubling of Judy Garland's first and final renditions of "Over the Rainbow" and an approximation of the sound from James Dean's car crash.



Left: Dealer Dominique Levy and Marta de Mello. Right: Designers Zoe Eckhaus and Mike Latta.

Another cab took us back to Frieze, where Kunsthalle Basel director Elena Filipovic was launching the latest of three new books, *The Artist as Curator*, published by Mousse, in a illuminating conversation with Obirst about David Hammons and Marcel Duchamp, the subjects of Filipovic's other new volumes.

Clearly, art requires tireless attention. During Frieze Week, fortunately, that's what there is to do. Since the fair's Reading Room was near the Focus section for galleries younger than twelve, I took it in, stopping first for a chat, naturally, with dealers Malin Stahl and Lisa Panting. Their spunky Hollybush Gardens gallery harbors not just one but two of this year's Turner Prize nominees, Andrea Büttner and the always appealing Lubaina Himid.

Focus, meanwhile, really lived up to its name, yet it was the least populated. Something was wrong with this picture. Aren't collectors still pursuing emergent talents? They're making a mistake not to support these galleries, the first rung of the ladder to stardom, and the hardest to keep up.

It sent me back out to catch shows I'd missed earlier in the week. The sun was up, the temperature mild, and the art in every gallery seemed happiest in quiet, domestically scaled environments.

It was civilized, and reminded me of something Filipovic had said about the way the ephemeral makes history and accumulates value—not by putting a big price on an object but by putting it in a context that creates meaning.

Art fairs have their place.

London's is bigger.

Now let's see what Paris has to offer.

— *Linda Yablonsky*



Left: MoCAD senior curator Jens Hoffmann. Right: Frieze cofounder Amanda Sharp and collector Andrew Hale.



Left: Dealer Lorcan O'Neill and architect Luca Cipelletti. Right: MoMA chief curator Stuart Comer and dealer Peter Currie.



Left: Collector Valeria Napoleone and Studio Voltaire director Joe Scotland. Right: Artist Sarah Morris, filmmaker and writer Manthia Diawara, and artist Melvin Edwards.



Left: Art attorney John Silberman and dealer Xan Serafin. Right: Artist Sue Webster.