

Full Circle

LONDON 10.08.16



Left: Artists [Anthea Hamilton](#) and [Helen Marten](#). Right: Choreographer [Michael Clark](#). (All photos: [Linda Yablonsky](#))

WHAT'S AN ART FAIR GOOD FOR?

You might be tempted to say, "Art," but that's not always the case. The highest purpose of a fair is to generate bonding opportunities for people who make art go.

When the fair is Frieze and the city is London, they come in great number from across the globe, the trouble spots and the tranquil ones (if such places still exist). Paths cross constantly, whether by intention or chance. The more incestuous the fraternity, the greater its success.

On Tuesday night, for example, a line formed outside the gallery that Brussels- and Paris-based dealer [Almine Rech](#) was opening with an exhibition by [Jeff Koons](#). The new space is on Grosvenor Hill, just steps from [Gagosian](#), Koons's primary dealer. Yet one of the first visitors to pay his respects was [David Zwirner](#), the artist's other dealer in New York, where Rech will soon open another venue with a show of [Picassos](#) and [Calders](#). Its two curators are her husband, [Bernard Ruiz-Picasso](#), the only legitimate grandson of you-know-who, and [Sandy Rower](#), grandson of [Alexander Calder](#).

May the circle be unbroken—that's the fair week mojo.



Left: Dealer [Almine Rech](#) and artist [Jeff Koons](#). Right: Artist [Ed Ruscha](#) and Hayward Gallery director [Ralph Rugoff](#).

[Zwirner](#) didn't stay with [Koons](#) longer than it took to shake hands. The dealer had to get back to his Grafton Street outpost, where he was opening exhibitions by [Neo Rauch](#) and new collaborators [Raymond Pettibon](#) and [Marcel Dzama](#). [Gagosian](#) had new paintings by [Ed Ruscha](#).

The [Koons](#) and [Ruscha](#) shows were crowded with people shuttling between the two galleries. Rech had several [Koons](#) "Gazing Ball" paintings, plus two new stainless steel sculptures based on porcelain figurines of [Degas](#) ballerinas, but made so smooth and glossy that they looked as if they would liquefy at a glance. In fact, [Koons](#) said he had photographed the porcelain models underwater before making them tall and large. "The [David's](#) not bad either," he remarked, indicating his gazing ball-attuned appropriation of [Jacques-Louis David's](#) *Intervention of the Sabine Women*. Personally, I wish he would return to contemporary subjects. "How were these paintings made?" asked French art blogger [Judith Benhamou-Huet](#). [Koons](#) hesitated a moment. Wasn't it obvious? "By hand," he replied, gently.

The droll Ruscha, meanwhile, can still make word paintings that surprise. These were the color of a desert and juxtaposed the values of words like “mile” and “inch” through changes in scale. One canvas, however, had only arrows pointing in different directions. “They’re showing the way,” Ruscha said, breaking from a conversation with Hayward Gallery director Ralph Rugoff, curator of “The Infinite Mix,” a show of music-driven video art that many people, Rugoff included, told me was not to be missed.



Left: Artists Nathaniel Mellors and Tala Madani with dealer Mara McCarthy. Right: Dealer David Zwirner.

But this night, the night before Frieze, belonged to the new. Dealer Bill Powers speed-walked me through Mayfair to Claridge’s, where Parisian dealer Kamel Mennour was opening a show of new work by Latifa Echakhch in a new, shoebox-size outlet on the opposite side of the hotel’s lobby from design dealer Patrick Seguin’s equally compact shop. Cognizant of a certain threat underlying the current American election, Echakhch had broken an oxidized, bronze liberty bell and scattered the pieces. “It’s a vintage bell,” she said. “I may have a smile on my face, but my heart is crying.”

We continued our walk. At the Pilar Corrias gallery, extended family associations gave added dimension to “Shitty Disco,” Tala Madani’s darkly feminine update on cave painting. By her side were Nathaniel Mellors, her artist husband, and her Los Angeles dealer, Mara McCarthy (daughter of Paul), as well as Bidoun editor Negar Azimi and MoMA curator Stuart Comer. On the way to dinner at Dickie Fitz, they stopped at Carroll/Fletcher to catch the closing minutes of a reception for Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, of New York and Ramallah, where there were small objects on tables and on the floor, which young artists now seem to prefer to walls.

At the urging of White Columns director Matthew Higgs, Powers departed for Tramps, where Peter Doig had organized a show of paintings by Denzil Forrester, soon to appear in New York. When the dinner for Madani turned out to be mainly truffle rice balls in no great supply, I taxied to the Kensington Palace Gardens home of Valeria Napoleone, a collector of art by women, who was hosting a heartier buffet for Jamian Juliano-Villani’s installation at Studio Voltaire. Among the guests was Anthea Hamilton, the lone Turner Prize finalist braving the market without gallery representation—no small feat during Frieze.

Fair organizers deserve praise for dispensing with weighty show catalogues—a waste of paper in this age of the JPEG—in favor of well-written journals put together by editors of *Frieze* magazine, which is celebrating its twenty-fifth year this week.



Left: Collector Valeria Napoleone. Right: Dealer David Cabrera, artist Joan Semmel, and dealer Alexander Gray.

The weather in London also went against custom, when bright sunlight and clear autumn skies accompanied thousands of VIPs to the fair’s fourteenth edition and to its younger sibling, *Frieze Masters*, opening on Wednesday at opposite ends of Regents Park. Due to the miscalculation of an Uber driver, I started at the latter, and was instantly baffled.

Hauser & Wirth’s presentation of modern works by the likes of Philip Guston with medieval religious paintings was confusing. “We’re collaborating with Moretti Fine Art,” explained gallery director Marc Payot. But why? “It’s interesting,” he said. Collaboration here was common. Chicago’s Corbett vs. Dempsey and London’s Thomas Dane combined to show 1960s collages and paintings by American and British artists. Dominique Lévy and Marianne Boesky joined forces with Sprüth-Magers for an all-Frank Stella arrangement that included a “stripe” painting—his first—from the Whitney’s Stella retrospective. The secondary market sure is quick.

Zwirner’s spare installation of signal works by Blinky Palermo, On Kawara, and Donald Judd, among others, was especially suave. “The committee gave us the prize for best booth!” Zwirner said, proudly. The Helly Nahmad corner was even simpler. It had just three paintings—all late Picassos. I needed lunch.

After spinning back several hundred years to the illuminated manuscripts at Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books, I stood impatiently in the twenty-first century line at the understaffed and inefficient Locanda Locatelli, praying the sandwich supply wouldn't run out. The line happened to form at the top of the aisle for Spotlight, the section reserved for neglected '60s and '70s art resuscitated by galleries that Menil Collection curator Toby Kamps selected for the fair. "It's good this year, isn't it?" he said. Any fair that features paintings by Joan Semmel (at Alexander Gray) is fine with me.



Left: Sharjah Biennial curator Christine Tohme and Serralves Museum director Suzanne Cotter. Right: Sharjah Biennial artistic director Hoor Al-Qasimi.

In this carpeted, relatively pleasant place, one could actually focus on art—whenever people didn't distract. I found LACMA director Michael Govan and his wife Katharine Ross at the Michael Rosenfeld stand, studying fetishistic, black leather heads by Nancy Grossman. "We already have one," he said. He seemed to want more.

Frieze Masters, in fact, seems to be catnip for museum professionals. Geneva's Centre d'Art Contemporain director, Andrea Bellini, was in the photo booth that Bologna's P420 Arte Contemporanea brought to its restaging of Franco Vaccari's "Photomatic d'Italia" (1972–74). Fondation Beyeler director Sam Keller stopped in at Freymond-Guth to see the latex wall and window sculptures that the late Swiss artist Heidi Bucher made by literally skinning the rooms of her grandmother's condemned house. And Art Institute of Chicago deputy director Ann Goldstein was examining every Spotlight booth with Wexner Center director Sherry Geldin, the woman who gave Goldstein her first job, in the early years of LA MoCA.

On their exit, they passed Hammer Museum curator Aram Moshayedi and National Portrait Gallery director Nicholas Cullinan, who was making tracks from the Frieze tent so quickly that no one had a chance to ask if the rumors circulating that pegged him to replace retiring Tate museums director Nicholas Serota were true—or if Whitechapel Gallery director Iwona Blazwick would get the nod.

The only person missing when I crossed the threshold into Frieze was Charon. All hell seemed to have broken loose, there was so much art and so many people buying it that I couldn't help but wonder if a day would come when all of this would end up in a Xanadu well beyond Charles Foster Kane's wildest dreams.



Left: Dealer Mehdi Chouakri with artists Mai-Thu Perret, Sylvie Fleury, and John Armleder. Right: Dealer Marian Goodman.

Basically, there are two kinds of dealers here: those that sell, and those that "place" work in select collections. I couldn't tell if the galleries participating in a special section devoted to solo shows of the '90s were doing either one, but it was fun to see what its curator Nicolas Trembley thought worth remembering of the time before the internet, before globalization, before Frieze, and before filthy lucre wiped out experimentation.

Galerie Neu's Thilo Wermke and Alexander Schröder were standing by their Daniel Pflumm presentation and handing out little stickers. Stepping into the exact recreation of Wolfgang Tillmans's first gallery show of photographs, at Daniel Buchholz's Cologne space, in 1993, Tate Modern curator Mark Godfrey exclaimed, "I had no idea that the gallery was this small!" The photos featured plenty of people on Ecstasy. Remember Ecstasy? Remember exercise videos? At Mehdi Chouakri's stand, Sylvie Fleury recreated her '93 scatter of TV monitors playing the videos by such fitness gurus of the period as Jane Fonda and Raquel Welch. "That's where I started finding sculptures in the old days," Fleury said of the videos, "when the fashion world started making things that looked like art."

Back in the aisles, Serpentine Gallery curator Hans Ulrich Obrist was handing out flyers for his "Miracle Marathon" this weekend. It focuses on magical thinking and turns on something he termed "fuckosophy." I was intrigued. "It's an *urgent* word, no?" he said.

At the Kurimanzutto booth, a jungle gym of a sculpture by Leonor Antunes hung like vines over the desk, where two bottles of champagne were on display—clear evidence that the Mexico City gallery had taken the Frieze stand prize, sponsored by Ruinart. “I’ve never won anything in my life before!” exclaimed an excited Mónica Manzutto. “Nothing! Never. This is great.”



Left: Artist Ingar Dragset. Right: Artist Laura Owens and Whitney Museum chief curator Scott Rothkopf.

This was the first Frieze I can remember where I spotted not a single carpetbagging celebrity, but I did see artists like Martin Boyce, Jim Lambie, and William Kentridge, some with work in the fair, others just looking. In the Focus section for young galleries at the far reaches of the tent, Ingar Dragset was studying the soft-penis paintings by Celia Hempton hung on thick walls she painted more abstractly at Southard Reid. And in a live performance, Darja Bajagić and Lloyd Corporation artists set up a faux internet café and teased fairgoers with luxury goods they couldn’t buy for all the money in the world.

Darkness fell, and it was on to Soho, where Laura Owens was showing an astonishing number of new and varied paintings at Sadie Coles HQ. “It took twelve art handlers to install the show,” reported Ryan Sullivan, one of many other artists in attendance, including Jordan Wolfson, Sam Falls, Magali Reus, Hillary Lloyd, Anthea Hamilton, and Helen Marten, who is definitely on a roll as a Turner Prize finalist with a concurrent solo show at the Serpentine.

Marten has mixed feelings about her sudden prominence. “If you win the Turner, you have to go on TV and speak!” she protested. “People think artists want the limelight, but it’s horrid.” I’m not sure Hamilton, who was beside her, agreed. Nonetheless, with curators like the Whitney’s Scott Rothkopf, Chisenhale Gallery director Polly Staple, and MoMA colleagues Laura Hoptman, David Platzker, and Comer joining dealers Carol Greene and Gavin Brown and Gisela Capitan, both artist got plenty of attention at the resolutely vegan, communal dinner at One Belgravia that Owens requested from chef Margot Henderson.

Matthew Higgs, an avatar of disco music from around the world—see his Instagram account—took to the decks with Andrew Hale to spin for dancers who wanted to stay up all night. (Apparently, quite few.)



Left: Dealer Sadie Coles. Right: Dealers Erika Weiss, Kathryn Erdman, and Maureen Paley with artist Maureen Gallace and dealer Cristian Alexa.

For those without hangovers and not required to stay in the Frieze tents, Thursday was a good day for walking around town to look at art in galleries and museums. First, at the ICA, Sharjah Art Foundation president Hoor Al-Qasimi announced the artists and locations (Sharjah, Beirut, and online) and discussed the connective tissue of the thirteenth Sharjah Biennial, opening in March and curated by Ashkal Alwan director Christine Tohme. “Everything we do is an experiment,” Al-Qasimi told me, speaking of the unsettled conditions in her part of the world—or, actually, everywhere.

I strolled down the Strand to the Store, a vacant office building where I watched all ten videos in Rugoff’s show, coproduced by the Hayward (currently closed for rehabbing) and the Vinyl Factory. Among the films—every one a standout—were a new, holographic piece by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and *Bam Bam’s Dream*, a partly animated documentary that Jeremy Deller and Cecilia Bengolea made for the current São Paulo Bienal. It follows a female daggering champion in Jamaica and is by turns ecstatic and horrifying.

The evening brought even more joy in dance—with Maureen Paley’s hubbub of an East End party for Maureen Gallace at St John Bread and Wine coming right on the tail of the premiere, at the Barbican, of three new works by choreographer Michael Clark. Set to the music of Erik Satie, Patti Smith, and David Bowie, with gorgeous lighting by Charles Atlas and perfect costumes by Stevie Stewart, this was the happiest experience of my week—one shared with a predominately art-world audience (think Sarah Lucas, Jarvis Cocker, Charles Asprey, and ICA director-elect Stefan Kalmár).

"No frills beauty," said Tate Modern curator Catherine Wood. "I loved being in Michael's theatrical darkness—such an antidote to two days of overexposure in the fair!"

Context is everything.

— *Linda Yablonsky*



Left: Artists Space director Stefan Kalmár. Right: Artist Jeremy Deller and dealer Toby Webster.



Left: Frieze cofounders Matthew Slotover and Amanda Sharp with *Frieze* editor Jennifer Higgie. Right: MoMA curator Stuart Comer and dealer Thor Shannon.



Left: Dealer Lucy Chadwich and Frieze Art Fair director Victoria Siddall. Right: White Columns director Matthew Higgs and dealer Gavin Brown.



Left: Dealer Nicky Verber and artist Martin Boyce. Right: Artist Daniel Buren.



Left: Dealers Peter Currie and Daniel Buchholz. Right: Artist Charles Atlas.



Left: Artist Anne Hardy. Right: Artist Brian Belott.



Left: Artist Latifa Echakhch. Right: Artist Basel Abbas.



Left: Artist Celia Hempton and dealer Guillaume Sultana. Right: Writer Kirsty Bell.



Left: Artist Charlotte Prodger with Glasgow International director Sarah McCrory. Right: Artist Pablo Bronstein and Studio Voltaire director Joe Scotland.



Left: Artist Simon Fujiwara at The Photographer's Gallery with an image from "Joanne," his rebranding campaign to restore the reputation of an art teacher victimized by tabloid scandal. Right: Artist Magali Reus.



Left: Collector Bernard Ruiz-Picasso. Right: Collectors Emilio Re Rebaudengo, Olga Donskova, and Eugenio Re Rebaudengo.



Left: Collectors Don and Mera Rubell. Right: Collector Stephanie Foster and Hirshhorn Museum director Melissa Chiu.



Left: Collectors Thea Westreich and Ethan Wagner. Right: Collectors Christen and Derek Wilson.



Left: Dealer Chiara Tiberio with Geneva's Centre D'Art Contemporain director Andrea Bellini and dealer Alessandro Pasotti. Right: Dealer Bill Powers with art advisors Meredith Darrow and Benjamin Godsill.



Left: Dealer Franco Noero and artist Sam Falls. Right: Artist Tony Matelli and dealer Bill Powers.



Left: Dealer Jay Jopling. Right: Dealer Gregor Steiger.



Left: Dealer Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth. Right: Dealer Stefan Ratibor.



Left: Dealer Pepi Marchetti Franchi. Right: Dealer John Corbett.



Left: Dealers Felipe Dmab and Matthew Wood. Right: Dealers Thilo Wermke and Alexander Schröder.



Left: Dealers Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn and Bernard de Grunne. Right: Dealers Jose Kuri and Mónica Manzutto.



Left: Dealers Michal Ziegler and Dominic Eichler. Right: Dealers Malin Stahl and Lisa Panting.



Left: Delfina Foundation director Aaron Cezar. Right: Tate Modern curator Mark Godfrey.



Left: Fiorucci Art Trust director Milovan Farronato and dealer Rodrigo Editore. Right: Dealer Carol Green and Art Basel director Marc Spiegler.



Left: Fondation Beyeler director Sam Keller. Right: Liste director Peter Bläuer with curator Philipp Kaiser and artist April Street.



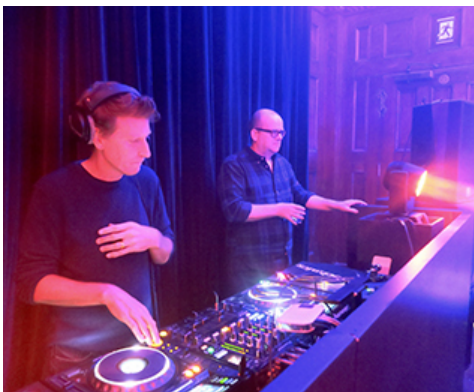
Left: Hammer Museum curator Aram Moshayedi. Right: Brooklyn Museum chief curator Nancy Spector.



Left: Jeff Koons studio chief Gary McCraw. Right: Sotheby's contemporary art specialist Eric Shiner.



Left: Katharine Ross and LACMA director Michael Govan. Right: Frieze "Spotlight" curator Toby Kamps and collector Paul Wattis.



Left: Musician Andrew Hale and White Columns director Matthew Higgs on the decks for Sadie Coles's party for Helen Marten. Right: Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster performance.



Left: Producer Ronnie Sassoon, filmmaker James Crump, and Marrakech Biennial founder Vanessa Branson. Right: Art Institute of Chicago photography curator Matthew Witkovsky.



Left: Tandem Works founder Alia Fattouh and Protocinema founder Mari Spirito. Right: Ebs and Metropolitan Museum curator Sheena Wagstaff.



Left: Wexner Center director Sherri Geldin and Art Institute of Chicago deputy director and chief curator [Ann Goldstein](#). Right: Kunsthalle Basel president Martin Hatebur and dealer Marco Frignati.



Left: Whitechapel Gallery curator Lydia Yee and artist Christian Marclay. Right: Chisenhale Gallery director [Polly Staple](#) and artist [Jordan Wolfson](#).