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# Pulse Sales Show Return of Appetite for Big-Ticket Art

By Emma Allen

MIAMI— Outside yesterday's private preview brunch for the **Pulse Miami** art fair, the mood was mellow and contented as the guests milled around, sipping mimosas and screwdrivers or lounging on artist **Only Genger's** "beefcakes," woven-rope sculptural chaise lounges. One could almost hear a collective sigh of relief among dealers and collectors alike as it became clear that it was safe to bask in the sun. Art was selling, and not just the multitude of small works on paper and affordable photographs that dealers — wary of the reverberations of the economic crisis — had shipped in for the event. Massive, expensive works were being snatched up by reinvigorated collectors, both the established ones and those newer to the collecting game.

The big Renaissance man about town, **Johnny Pigozzi**, strolled through Pulse tapping away on his smart phone, as did actress **Isabella Rossellini**, **Creative Time's Anne Pasternak**, **Performa's RoseLee Goldberg**, and the **Armory Show's Katelijne De Backer**. Representatives from museums from across the country — from the **Met**, to the **Norton**, to the **Whitney**, to the **Hirshhorn** — flocked in for the fair. Major collectors such as **Beth Rudin DeWoody**, **Marty Margulies**, and **Alain Servais**, meanwhile, could be seen prowling the aisles, or lounging in the grass admiring **Shannon Gillen & Guests'** dance performance "Wall," for which women dressed in white hurled themselves against, ran around, and rolled along a large white wall.

Inside, those hunting for new artworks to add to their collections launched themselves into the galleries's white-walled booths with an abandon almost equal to

that of the lithe dancers on the lawn. At the booth of Santa Monica's **Mark Moore Gallery**, sales were phenomenal. "Times are what they are, but I'm bowled over," Moore said. "I don't know if it feels like 2007, but it's pretty damn close." He sold the largest painting **Allison Schulnick** has ever made, a monumental 8.5-by-16.5-foot work, slathered with thickly layered oil paint, and titled "Performance No. 3," for around \$40,000 to Kansas's **Nerman Museum**. Meanwhile, a wall-spanning 30-panel **Kim Rugg** work, "The Story is One Sign" (2010), has been placed on reserve for the Norton Museum in West Palm Beach.

"These are things that a lot of people in the last two years would have maybe been hesitant to bring to an art fair," Moore said, "and they were the first things to sell. Go figure." The gallery also sold a sizeable portrait of **Bianca Jagger** by Israeli painter **Yigal Ozeri** for \$40,000 and sold out of works by **Kenichi Yokono**. Moore noted that there were fewer celebrities rummaging around the fair this year, adding that the people buying work were "hardcore, dedicated collectors and new people too." Gone from the landscape are the "speculator collectors" he saw in 2007, the ones who were only after "the hot new thing" that they could quickly resell for a profit.

Dealer **Pavel Zoubok** manned his New York gallery's booth and expressed confidence that the quality of Pulse would ensure good sales through tough times. "One of the great things about this fair is that it's always been consistently strong — a strong audience, strong exhibitors," he said. "It's a fair that's always had a very strong word of mouth." **Elana Rubinfeld**, the director of **Fred Torres Collaborations** in New York (a gallery that was showing at Pulse for the first time this year) was pleased by how "serious, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic" the audience was, adding that while all of the work she had sold so far had been to people with whom the gallery already had a relationship, many new collectors were eagerly putting works on hold.

**Rebecca Hicks** of London's **Purdy Hicks Gallery** noted that the fair was "much bossier today" than it had been the last time she had a booth there, in 2008. A representative from **Jen Bekman Projects**, which is at Pulse for its second year, says that in the first few hours it was immediately clear that it was going to be better than last year and that they had already sold a **Beth Dow** portfolio for just under \$30,000. New York's **Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery** sold numerous works by Korean artist **Airan Kang** along with a \$50,000 **Brigitte Kowan** light sculpture. The sale by Washington D.C.'s **Conner Contemporary Art** of a multi-channel video installation by Italian **Federico Solmi** and a digital light sculpture by **Leo Villareal** proved that harder-to-collect-and-display new media was even finding buyers.

Other major sales include a portfolio of photographs of **Kate Moss**, which went for \$75,000 and an **Andy Warhol** self-portrait, which went for \$15,000, both sold

by New York's **Danziger Projects**. **Schroeder Romero & Shredder**, meanwhile, had two tapestries by **Andy Diaz Hope** and **Laurel Roth** go for \$18,000 and \$15,000 respectively, with a Roth sculpture going for \$21,000. **Yossi Milo** sold a number of photographs by **Mohamed Bourouissa** for \$14,000 each, along with a large **Pieter Hugo** photo for \$20,000, while **Nick Lawrence** of **Freight + Volume** parted with a \$10,000 **Kent Dorn** landscape.

Over at Amsterdam's **Torch** gallery, **Mo van der Have** — the young son of founder **Adriaan van der Have** who recently assumed the reins of his father's operation — was thrilled to report booming sales. "I always set my expectations low and my hopes high," van der Have explained, "but actually it's more towards my hopes than my expectations." He had sold three pieces by a Canadian artist, five by a Belgian artist, and had seen interest in work from real estate mogul **Michael Shvo** (who's been known to wrap his developments in ads that read, "It's Shvo Time").

One piece at **Torch** that had not yet found a buyer was a sculpture by **Katinka Simonse** (a.k.a. **Tinkebell**) who in the past ruffled feathers with her 2009 "My dearest cat pinkeltje," a purse made out of the pelt of her cat. This time, the artist — whom van der Have calls "the biggest animal activist there is" — deconstructed a taxidermied feline into cubes, a commentary on the fact that we treat our pets like toys. But while the dead cat did not immediately fly off **Torch's** shelf, a massive, debauched scene painted by **Terry Rodgers** sold quickly for around \$85,000.