

THE ART NEWSPAPER

UMBERTO ALLEMANDI & CO. PUBLISHING

LONDON NEW YORK TURIN VENICE MILAN ROME

ART BASEL DAILY EDITION 15 JUNE 2011

From Selma to New York



Hard hitting American artist Theaster Gates will be the official representative for the next edition of the Armory Show (8-11 March 2012). An artist, musician and cultural planner, Gates' work often engages with black history in the US. One of his latest pieces, *In the Event of Race Riot II*, 2011, includes sections of fire hoses used in the 1960s to disperse civil rights protesters in Birmingham, Alabama. He is represented by Kavi Gupta, which is at Volta this year. A 2010 Whitney Biennial artist, Gates is the director of arts programme development at the University of Chicago. For the Armory Show, he will produce a limited edition work, following in the footsteps of previous artists including Gabriel Kuri and Pipilotti Rist, among others. Owned by Merchandise Mart, the Armory Show is facing increased competition following the announcement that Frieze, its London-based rival, plans to stage a New York edition next year (3-6 May). ■ Charlotte Burns

Opening report

Art world flexes its muscles

Sculptural, shiny or stripped down, it's a bulked up Art Basel

BASEL. As the "first choice" invitees clambered—literally—into the 42nd Art Basel vernissage yesterday, they were faced with more than 300 stands spread across two floors. While the fair may seem a confusing compendium of more than a century of art, a few significant trends clearly emerge, particularly in comparison with recent editions.

Collectors must have plenty of space to display their acquisitions, judging by the number of huge works on offer this year. Dasha Zhukova is one who has no space issues. She bought Jason Rhoades' installation at Art Unlimited for close to \$1m (through David Zwirner/Hauser & Wirth). But how many others could hang the mural sized-painting by James Rosenquist at Richard Feigen (*The Holy Roman Empire through Checkpoint Charlie*, 1994, \$2.75m, 2.0/A7) or the large-scale painting suite *Quartet*, 2011, by Satoko Nachi at Tomio Koyama for \$70,000 (2.1/K17)? Italian collector Jean Pigozzi rushed to buy the Nachi series as the fair opened. "For the first hour, I run. I'm like a horse with blinkers," said Pigozzi. Richard Nagy (2.0/A8) wanted to "stop people in their tracks" with the hulking *Loss of the Lisbon Rhinoceros*, 2008, by Walton Ford, on offer for around €1.8m. Simon Fujiwara's ambitious installation, *Letters from Mexico*, 2010, €45,000, comprising curtains in the colours of the Mexican flag and suspended glass cases, dominated Gió Marconi's booth (2.1/N17). "It makes sense to show something strong in Basel, and it's the right



Buffed: Liza Lou's *The Damned*, 2003-04, set the tone at L&M (2.0/B19)

time to be bold," said Esther Quiroga, the gallery's director.

The third dimension

The growth hormone that has been injected into two-dimensional works also appears to be bulking up sculpture. Collectors who have covered their walls can take their pick of large-scale sculptures including Thomas Houseago's *Yet To Be Titled (Large Head #1)*, 2010, at Xavier Hufkens (2.0/B18) for €250,000, or Matthew Monahan's towering *Grand Falconer*, 2011, for \$260,000 at Anton Kern (2.1/K8). Liza Lou's Biblical *The Damned*, 2003-04, on offer for just under \$1m, set

the tone at L&M (2.0/B19). This gold-beaded couple is an "exaggerated version of the Expulsion", said Sarah Watson, the director of the gallery's LA outpost. "The shake-up in the market has made people look at things differently," she added.

Mirror, mirror

The gilded, spangly surface of Lou's sculpture points to another trend: shiny objects reflecting the viewer. From the habitual, highly polished Anish Kapoor works (on show at Massimo Minini, 2.1/P1, and Lisson, 2.1/K12) to the mirrored Pistolettos at galleries including Luhring Augustine (2.0/F11)

and Continua (2.1/M20), there are plenty of opportunities for visitors to check out their own reflections. The shattered glass of Doug Aitken's \$250,000 wall-piece *1968 (Broken)*, 2011, at 303 Gallery (2.1/J18) proved popular, attracting three reserves by 2pm, finally selling to a European private collector. "Two years ago everything was in silver, so it's just an evolution of that," said gallery director Mari Spirito, adding that this work is about "fragmented self-reflection". Posing in front of Pistoletto's vast *Bugo Nero*, 2010, for €450,000, a more cynical Lorenzo Fiaschi of Continua suggested that the taste for mirrors indicates a "sort of contemporary narcissism".

Kounellis's sewing-machine wall-piece, *Untitled*, 1989, is on offer for \$175,000. The artist is "reasonably priced", said gallery director Wendy Brandow, adding: "If you buy an artist straight out of grad school for \$100,000 you're betting, whereas an artist with a solid exhibition history is an intelligent choice."

The sky's the limit

The presence of several stands with truly breathtaking prices is a sign of the growing market confidence. Probably the most expensive work, which is also over ten metres long, is Andy Warhol's *One Hundred and Fifty Black/White/Grey Marilyns*, 1980, at Bischofberger (2.0/C10), priced at \$80m. At Marlborough (2.0/D13), a booth mainly devoted to Francis Bacon features a lilac-hued triptych, *Three Studies of the Human Body*, 1970, on offer for \$50m. Unsurprisingly, Pablo Picasso holds sway with a \$15m *Nu Debout*, 1968, at Acquavella (2.0/E16) and a \$14m *L'homme a la Pipe* from the same year at Helly Nahmad (2.0/E6). "The strongest market is at this level. People still want the best," claimed Nahmad, although he had not confirmed any sales at the end of the first day. ■ Georgina Adam, Charlotte Burns and Melanie Gerlis

Our sales report will be in our final edition, 17 to 19 June, and online from Friday, 17 June at www.theartnewspaper.com

A-listers out in force

The art world's leading names jostled to get into the fair at 11am yesterday morning. The crush included major collectors such as Berlin's Christian Boros, alpha US collectors Norah and Norman Stone, Eli and Edythe Broad and the ever-energetic Miami-based Rubells. Among the power curators were Nicholas Serota, the director of the Tate, and Beatrix Ruf from the Kunsthalle Zurich. The US-based collector and publishing magnate Peter Brant, financier Adam Lindemann, British property developer and collector David Roberts and François Pinault's adviser, Caroline Bourgeois, were also spotted. Adding to the glamour factor was supermodel Linda Evangelista, while artists included John Baldessari and Takashi Murakami, sporting his characteristic sumo-style topknot. ■

Paper, scissors, stone...

At the other end of the aesthetic scale there is a decided turn towards the simplicity of European modernism, especially artists from the Arte Povera and Zero movements, on both floors. "A lot of young US artists and collectors are looking at that period. It's an influence for the artists, and it's a generally undervalued group from the collectors' point of view. Everyone knows it in Italy, but we don't necessarily in the US," said Adrian Turner, a director at Marianne Boesky (2.1/M2). One notable favourite is Jannis Kounellis, on show at several stands including Bernier/Eliades (2.1/N13), Kewenig Galerie (2.0/C6) and Margo Leavin (2.0/A13), where

Australia to upgrade Venice pavilion

VENICE. The Australian pavilion at the Venice Biennale is to be demolished and replaced with a new building by 2015. The Australia Council has now launched a fund-raising drive to secure the A\$4m-A\$6m (€2.9m-€4.4m) required for the project.

In Basel, Simon Mordant, the commissioner of the 2013 Australian pavilion, told *The Art Newspaper* that the current building was constructed in 1988 to secure the last permanent plot in the Giardini released by the city of Venice, and was always intended to be temporary.

The two-level pavilion, which is built on a slope, is a notoriously

difficult space in which to show art. This year's biennale hosts work by sculptor Hany Armanious (until 27 November).

Mordant said: "We're not looking to build something architecturally outstanding but something that works for the artists."

Mordant, who is the co-chief executive of corporate advisory firm Greenhill Caliburn, also serves as the chairman of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and, with his wife Catriona, recently donated A\$15m (€11m) to the institution for its expansion project. He has now been asked to help the Australia Council raise funds for



Past its sell-by date

the new pavilion, and has already pledged A\$1m (€737,000) towards the project.

A feasibility study on the site, co-funded by the Mordants, was

carried out last year. It might be possible to move the pavilion so it overlooks the canal behind the building. The canal is currently used to transport rubbish but if it was used as a new access point for the Giardini, the authorities might divert the trash, he said.

The Giardini pavilions are seen as antiquated by many countries that are unhappy with their spaces, either because of the imperialist style of their architecture or because, as relative late-comers, their pavilions were hastily constructed in bad locations. The question is: will others follow Australia's lead? ■ Cristina Ruiz

