

SOFA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 20, 2010

COLLECTORS BUY-IN

WELL-QUALIFIED CROWDS DISCOVER 2ND SOFA WEST: SANTA FE

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Dealers and galleries at the second annual SOFA WEST: Santa Fe 2010 held July 8-11 at the Santa Fe Convention Center reported steady sales, most to new clients from all over the United States. Overall fair attendance climbed to 12,000 from 10,000 persons last year. An estimated 1800 persons attended Opening Night on July 7, which was a special member preview for the prestigious Museum of New Mexico Foundation and SOFA VIPs.

Mark Lyman, President of The Art Fair Company and Founder/Director of SOFA fairs, which are also held annually in Chicago and New York, says, "Our second year in Santa Fe was right on track! Sales were definitely on the rise. And dealers across the board reported a more qualified audience—important local art collectors were seen at the fair as well as noted buyers from out-of-town, and more museum curators and directors."



1800 people attended the SOFA WEST: Santa Fe Opening Night Preview, July 7



Gallerist Nami Dunham and guest with the work of Sakiyama Takayuki in the Joan B. Mirviss Ltd. booth on opening night.

Renowned specialist in contemporary Japanese art, Joan B. Mirviss, Ltd. of Manhattan, New York, new to SOFA WEST this year, says, "I'm thrilled at the level of aesthetic sophistication" of attendees, which she noted was on a par with collectors at New York's venerable Asian Art Fair. Mirviss continues, "Even those who had never seen this work before, knew what they were looking at and some audibly gasped." Mirviss reported steady sales—most to new clients—and that collector attendance at the fair "from both Coasts" was very strong. By 7:30 pm Opening Night she had decided she would return as an exhibitor next year.

Renowned scholar, dealer and author, Garth Clark, who with his partner, Mark Del Vecchio owned prestigious ceramic galleries in New York and Los Angeles for many years, exhibited in SOFA WEST for the second year as CLARK + DELVECCHIO of Santa Fe. Clark says, "This show is a 50% improvement from last year. The quality has shot up dramatically, and that is a really good thing. We have made sales, new client contacts, and the show has gone really well. If SOFA WEST keeps growing like this from year to



Guest with the work of Christine McHorse in the CLARK+ DELVECCHIO booth at SOFA WEST 2010

year, Santa Fe is going to become a key market for this kind of artwork, which it has not been in the past. Plus, every square inch of printed matter, especially in the past two weeks, has been plastered with SOFA coverage and images; they have done a really great job with their PR and marketing, getting people here to see the show."



Guest admiring *Seattle Sunset* by Lino Tagliapietra in the Holsten Galleries booth at SOFA WEST 2010

Private dealer, Kenn Holsten of Santa Fe, long-time owner/director of the prestigious Holsten Galleries in the Berkshires, who relocated to Santa Fe, says he was “very pleased with the response” to the glass art of Muranese glass *maestro* Lino Tagliapietra (who attended the fair from Italy), on offer in the mid-five to six-figure range. Major sales by top secondary market dealer, Donna Schneier of Palm Beach, FL included iconic pieces by Bertil Vallien, Peter Voukos, Dale Chihuly, David Gihooly, Betty Woodman and Michael Lucero. Schneier says she was delighted with the sale of a rare “double plate” from 1981 by Viola Frey. She reported an excellent show, with “70% new clients, many of them contemporary art collectors,” 50% of which, she says, were from out-of-town and had come in for the fair.



Guests viewing 2 Viola Frey plates in the Donna Schneier Fine Art booth at SOFA WEST 2010

SOFA WEST was also a proving ground for Native American works of very high quality that have flown for too long under the radar as “Southwest Indian art.” CLARK+ DELVECCHIO presented new Native Southwest ceramics by Christine McHorse, Diego Romero and Virgil Ortiz, which sold very well in the five-figure range.



Diego Romero *Sky Spirit*, 2010 CLARK+DELVECCHIO

Also four top Native jewelers were introduced to receptive SOFA collectors in the SWAIA@SOFA booth. SWAIA stands for Southwestern Alliance for Indian Arts, producer of the acclaimed Indian Market on Santa Fe’s Museum Hill in August. Jeweler Cody Sanderson says, “Many Indian art collectors expect us to keep to the old ways, but not here (at SOFA). Here, we are artists pushing the envelope of what we do, who just happen to be Natives. This show proves we can compete at the global level.” Sanderson said 80% of his sales were to new clients. Also exhibited by SWAIA was Kenneth Johnson who sold a gold necklace for \$100,000, one of the major sales at the fair. Johnson says, “SOFA created a diverse market for Santa Fe. It was a great show and I look forward to SOFA becoming a gateway for other Native art.”



Guests trying on a piece by Pat Pruitt in the SWAIA@SOFA booth

Jane Sauer of Jane Sauer Gallery, Santa Fe says, “Sales at SOFA WEST were close to exceeding our record sales at SOFA NEW YORK this past April. We had a great show.” Sauer reported 90% of her sales were to new clients, 50% of them out-of-towners “who would never had walked into my gallery on Canyon Road. This is why local galleries should



Carol Shinn *Chimney Rock* Jane Sauer Gallery

exhibit in SOFA WEST.” A top sale at Jane Sauer’s booth was *Chimney Rock* by Carol Shinn, which sold to a major Western museum. Sauer says, “I had *two* collectors place additional holds on the piece. I could have sold it three times!”



The Linda Durham Contemporary Art booth at SOFA WEST: Santa Fe 2010

New exhibitor Linda Durham of the well-established Santa Fe fine art gallery, Linda Durham Contemporary Art says, “SOFA was very well produced---from the very beginning of the process in late winter through the take-down on Sunday evening! In my opinion, the entire event was extremely successful in terms of marketing, press, attendance, and organization. I congratulate you.”

Lyman concludes, “We are again gratified by our supportive partners in Santa Fe like the Museum of New Mexico Foundation, Santa Fe Opera, SWAIA, Santa Fe Gallery Association, Santa Fe New Mexican, which produced a handsome and informative SOFA WEST magazine, and many others too numerous to mention. The Mayor’s Office and Santa Fe’s City Government are a pleasure to work with and the Convention Center is a terrific venue. Our out-of-town collectors thoroughly enjoyed the many exciting art events around town, its breath-taking scenery, fine lodging, restaurants and shopping. They will be back next year.” Lyman adds, “We are excited about our new SOFA WEST dates in August 2011 at the Convention Center, where we will be well-positioned in the middle of Santa Fe’s high summer season.”

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