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Satellite fairs during Frieze week in New York

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Parallel events surrounding the main action at Frieze is attracting a range of artists and buyers



Chéri Samba's 'L'employeur et l'employé' (2013), at Magnin-A Gallery at 1:54

The New York-based art adviser Candace Worth has her sights set on a specific satellite fair in New York during Frieze week. “Nada is terrific; it’s the younger, scrappier fair that focuses on emerging talent with lower price points,” she says.

Nada (the New Art Dealers Alliance’s non-profit fair) is bringing 100 exhibitors to Pier 36 (Basketball City; May 14-17), 29 of them first-timers, including Queer Thoughts Gallery of New York and the art space Kunsthall Oslo. “It’s not a place to necessarily discover the next hot artists, but more a place to discover the next top dealers,” says Nilani Trent, a local art adviser and collector.

Nada is an art-circuit staple, but the fair landscape has changed since last year. The first New York edition of the 1:54 Contemporary African art fair will open at Pioneer Works in Red Hook, Brooklyn (May 15-17), comprising 16 galleries from Africa, Europe and the US. Its founding director is naturally upbeat about its prospects.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/28e5a00a-ea67-11e4-96ec-00144feab7de.html#axzz3Zx67Geyh>

“1:54 predominantly aims to open a window on to contemporary African and African-diasporic art for American and African-American collectors while remaining accessible to all audiences,” says Touria El Glaoui, the fair’s founding director. The small-scale event will be a test for this burgeoning new market.

Meanwhile, the Downtown modern and contemporary art fair launched its first edition last May at New York’s 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue. Its roster was top-heavy with high-end dealers keen to access the important market hub that is New York. “That was a test fair, but we soon realised there was no room to grow,” says Nick Korniloff, a director and partner of Art Miami LLC, which runs the stalwart fair Art Miami. So Downtown is no more and has been replaced by Art Miami New York, taking place on Pier 94 (May 14-17).

Korniloff is pushing the idea that his new fair will be a Mecca for secondary-market material. “Art Miami New York complements the postwar auctions in New York; no other fair does that,” he says. (Sotheby’s Impressionist and Modern art evening sale took place on Tuesday; Christie’s corresponding sale is scheduled for May 14.)

Korniloff is bullish about his new venture in New York. Art Miami New York will feature 100 galleries, two-thirds of which are US-based. The gallery list also includes 22 European dealers — Galería Casa Cuadrada of Bogotá and Uruguayan dealer Piero Atchugarry stand out as South American participants.

Hans Alf, of the eponymous Copenhagen-based gallery, is showing primary market works at Art Miami New York by five artists including Christian Lemmerz and Natasha Kissell (prices on the stand range from \$10,000 to \$80,000). He believes that there are “enough collectors to go round” this week, and thinks there will be footfall from Frieze New York. “We have some excellent clients there, but this is a new fair so I’m not sure we’ll cover our costs,” he says.

Spring Masters New York at Park Avenue Armory (to May 12), was originally the art-and-antiques Spring Show NYC, but has since been rebranded by the New York advisory group Artvest, who acquired the fair in late 2013. Michael Plummer, co-founder of the group, says the aim is “to reposition it as a leading international fair of art and design, from antiquity to the 21st century”.

Sixty-one dealers — a mixed bag of varying quality — are participating this year in the new layout of hexagonal booths devised by the architect Rafael Viñoly; 28 are New York-based, showing that fairs on home turf can provide a lucrative “shopfront” for local galleries.

London’s John Martin Gallery makes a rare appearance on the fair scene at Spring Masters. “The market in New York represents about a fifth of all our sales, but trying to find the right platform is not at all easy,” says Martin. He is confident that 18 paintings of New York by British artist Andrew Gifford (\$7,000-\$12,000, with larger works priced at \$80,000) will find buyers.

“The theme of Spring Masters is ‘Juxtapositions: Collecting across Centuries’,” Plummer adds. “It’s our belief that this practice of the last decade of almost exclusively focusing on contemporary art to the exclusion of traditional art [is] a trend that [will] pass.”

This “crossover” collecting is hardly a new phenomenon, but he is convinced that the pattern will prevail. “Christie’s bold stroke of moving its Impressionist and Modern auctions to the same week as their contemporary sales is a sign that they also feel these distinctions are now arbitrary and obsolete,” he adds.

Not everyone thinks satellites flourish around Frieze. **Pulse** contemporary art fair coincided with the event last year, but opened during Armory Arts Week in March instead this year.

“Frieze New York has made itself a destination fair, then there are the May auctions, so there is less commitment from the collectors and curators to visit the satellite fairs during this period,” argues **Helen Toomer**, **Pulse’s** director.

Other key trade figures, though, say that new trends, and markets, are nonetheless evolving around the satellite fairs. Interior designer Steven Learner said in 2013 that “New York did not have a design fair of the calibre it deserves” — so he founded Collective Design, which launched the same year on Pier 57 with 23 modern and contemporary design dealers, mainly from the US. The inaugural fair came at a critical point in the development of the nascent contemporary design market.

Two years later, and the fair is motoring along in an enticing new location — a 60,000 sq ft industrial space, Skylight Clarkson Square, in West SoHo — with 29 dealers from Manhattan, Paris and Madrid (May 13-17).

The Stockholm-based 20th-century gallery Modernity has participated in all three editions. Last year, the gallery sold furniture by the late Finnish designer Eliel Saarinen to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

This year, meanwhile, it will present a selection of furniture by the 20th-century Danish designer Peder Moos (\$110,000-\$180,000).

Nilani Trent seems taken with Collective Design. “This type of focused fair helps art collectors understand that the market for design furniture is very much alive, with historic artists and designers commanding up to seven figures,” she says.

The Belgian collector Alain Servais, on the other hand, says he will head to 1:54 and to Flux, a new contemporary art fair in Harlem with a roster of emerging artists chosen by 10 guest curators (May 14-17).

“I need this access to art outside of the increasingly homogeneous ‘art circus’ — the same group of core galleries moving around the world from one fair to the other,” he says. “And I need to attend quality specialist events to justify the long flights.”