

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Independent fair delivers on diversity and quality with early sales

Collectors show they are willing to invest in work that is current—or feels like it—at the iconoclast New York fair

by Dan Duray

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“What’s amazing is that in this climate, all these fairs—the Armory Show, ADAA, Independent—are the best they have been in years,” said Sandy Rower, Alexander Calder’s grandson and the head of the artist’s foundation. “The dealers are just trying harder.”

He was just off the lobby at Spring Studios, where Independent, as iconoclastic as its name suggests, opened on 2 March to strong reviews. Judging by early sales at the sunny Tribeca space, collectors were rewarding dealers for their efforts to draw new attention to a markedly diverse cast of artists, including those who were formerly marginalised and newly relevant.

Zurich’s Galerie Francesca Pia brought a host of works by the in-demand Brooklyn artist Stefan Tcherepnin, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$20,000, and almost all of them sold immediately, from watercolours to tall, furry sculptures—almost all fresh out of the studio. “One of the works in the booth was made today,” said director Eva Kenny, declining to point out which one.

At Jack Hanley, works by Nikki Maloof were also made for the fair, albeit on a longer timeline. His walls were dominated by four paintings that seemed to create a porch in Maine, a touchstone for her work. Two had sold for \$15,000 each within hours of the opening, along with three of her drawings of bats.

Hunger for art that was only slightly less fresh continued at Sprüth Magers, where works by Thea Djordjaze, Kaari Upson (who will soon have a show at The New Museum) and David Ostrowski were all on reserve.

The publisher Triple Canopy was offering brilliant editions by the digital conceptual artist Cory Arcangel. Collectively bundled as Current Mood, the series of five works (a Photoshop gradient painting among them) comes in a flat-screen TV style box with the late record producer/Ponzi schemer Lou Pearlman’s face on it. Five of the ten editions, priced at \$40,000 apiece, had sold within two hours.

But brand-new art was not the only object of interest, as a number of galleries’ presentations were marked by a number of 1970s and 1980s revivals. Galerie Christophe Gaillard, showing at the New York fair for the first time, brought an array of 1970s pieces by Michel Journiac that play on themes of gender and sexual identity, as did annotated photographs by Hal Fischer at Project Native Informant.

Also in that category are Barbara Bloom’s mock travel posters from 1981—bearing slogans all too relevant to the current political climate—at David Lewis gallery, sold as a set of ten for \$75,000 or individually for \$10,000. In the next booth, Garth Greenan Gallery made the particularly inspired move of showing Howerdena Pindell’s video drawings from 1976, in which she photographed images on TV, covered them in tiny annotations and marks, and re-photographed them. These were on offer for \$25,000 each, and around half had already sold within hours.

Pindell herself was on hand at the booth and started to describe their editions when Greenan corrected her. These were the originals on the wall. “The originals look this good?” she remarked, adding that she hadn’t exactly taken extreme precautions to preserve them. “Well, I’ll be damned.”