



INTERNATIONAL ARTS | THE ART OF COLLECTING: FRIEZE NEW YORK

New York Version of Frieze Art Fair Comes Into Its Own

By MARA HOBERMAN MAY 8, 2014

Now in its third year, Frieze New York opens Friday on Randalls Island with more than 190 galleries, and a program including East River rowboat tours, rock concerts and an on-site hotel conceived by the American conceptual artist Allen Ruppersberg.

A spinoff of Frieze London, which has pitched its tent in Regent's Park every October since it was started by Frieze magazine in 2003, the American edition is a big draw for European galleries.

"New York is the center of the contemporary art world, so it's hard for a gallery from Europe not to take advantage of an art fair platform that offers an opportunity to come here," said Jocelyn Wolff, whose Paris gallery is showing work by several young Europeans, including Katinka Bock, Elodie Seguin and Christoph Weber, alongside a 1970 "Subway Drawing" by the New York artist William Anastasi.

New York, with its large art community, is a tough audience, however, and this posed certain challenges for Frieze New York's co-founders, Amanda Sharp and Matthew Slotover. "New Yorkers have everything and have seen everything" Mr. Slotover said, "so they might be skeptical about new people coming in and trying to show them something new."

Despite the discriminating local crowd and an off-the-beaten-path location (Randalls Island is a 20-minute ferry ride from midtown Manhattan), Ms. Sharp believes Frieze has reached its stride. "The fair has really matured, something which is made most obvious by the important artworks and ambitious projects

the galleries are bringing this year,” she said.

Several New York galleries are spotlighting major artists in solo booths: Gagosian (Edward Ruscha), Gavin Brown’s enterprise (Rirkrit Tiravanija), Gladstone (Carroll Dunham), and Marian Goodman (Danh Vo).

In addition to the galleries, which hail from 29 countries this year including Brazil, China and Mexico, the seven Frieze Projects commissioned for 2014 celebrate the Randalls Island location. Paying homage to the musical history of the island, which has hosted the Duke Ellington Orchestra and Jimi Hendrix, the Israeli artist Naama Tsabar has organized a concert series featuring female drummers.

Proposing a watery view of the fair grounds, the Brooklyn-based artist Marie Lorenz will offer East River tours in her handmade rowboat. “Usually when people come to New York, they fly in to J.F.K., get zipped around by taxis, travel underground by subway and very seldom get a sense that they are on an island inside of a moving estuary,” Ms. Lorenz said. “But in my boat, riders will be very close to the water and will get a real sense of the scale of the island.”

Inside the tent it will be business as usual for art professionals in the serpentine structure, which houses 250,000 square feet, or about 23,200 square meters, of temporary exhibition space.

New York galleries, from the Upper East Side to Brooklyn, make up nearly 30 percent of this year’s exhibitors. Although New York-based galleries do not necessarily need another venue, many of the local galleries see a Frieze booth as a worthy investment.

“I think New York galleries participate in Frieze because it’s a great fair and very impressive,” said Christopher D’Amelio, a partner at David Zwirner’s Chelsea gallery. “But also because we don’t want the fair to go away since it actually helps business during the time it is in town each year.”

Tyler Dobson, co-director of Real Fine Arts in East Greenpoint, said: “Most of the deals we did last year were with European collectors.”

European galleries, which occupy more than half of this year’s booths, are eager for the attention of New York collectors as well as familiar faces from across the Atlantic.

Esther Schipper, whose Berlin gallery is bringing works by the French artist

Pierre Huyghe and the Canadian artist group General Idea, said: “For a first gallery — as I am for a lot of artists — it’s really important to be visible at least once a year in New York.”

Thaddaeus Ropac, a dealer who has galleries in Paris and Salzburg, will be featuring recent works by Georg Baselitz, Robert Longo and Yan Pei-Ming at his booth. “I know many who are flying to New York for Frieze — from Paris, Germany, Austria, and Belgium,” Mr. Ropac said. “Collectors are coming from all of these small but very active countries because, for them, this is the one time of year they have to go to New York.”

This year, organizers are seeking to attract a wider audience with a series of talks by artists, site-specific works and educational workshops.

Describing these endeavors funded by the non-profit Frieze Foundation, Cecilia Alemani, curator of Frieze Projects, said, “Ninety percent of our audience is art professionals but, within that audience, the goal of Frieze Projects is to talk to those not necessarily going to the fair to buy: curators, museums, and a lot of students.”

If Frieze still feels new to New York, so do many of its participants.

In the fair’s Frame section, where galleries that have existed for less than eight years present work by a single artist, Galerie Sultana (Paris) is showcasing sculptures and photographs by the French artist Bettina Samson, who has had solo exhibitions in France, Germany and Britain, but has never shown in New York.

Also in the Frame section, Berlin’s PSM gallery will introduce the South African-born artist Ariel Reichman to a New York audience.

“I wanted to create something especially for the venue that hopefully provokes a continuous relationship with the scene here in New York —with curators, institutions, or collectors,” said Mr. Reichman, who came to the city for the first time a month ago to prepare his garden installation for Frieze.

Recognizing the fair’s “only in New York” allure, Ms. Sharp said: “I don’t think all of this could happen anywhere else. We’ve got the Manhattan skyline, 53 New York galleries, great New York restaurants and, of course, all of the local people who bring energy off the streets and straight into the fair.”

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