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An Edgy Art Fair Takes On Paris

A new art fair, the Paris Internationale, aims to be a hipper, cheaper alternative for collectors



Nicolas Party's pastel canvas 'Two Men With a Cat' is mounted on his temporary mural 'Green Decoration.' PHOTO: NICOLAS PARTY/GALERIE GREGOR STAIGER, ZURICH

By **MARA HOBERMAN**

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It's a Paris art-world tradition: Every so often, upstarts revolt and successfully take on the establishment. Think of the scandalous 1863 "Salon des Refusés," which included artists that had been rejected by the official Salon, including future greats Édouard Manet and James McNeill Whistler. Or take the impressionists, who shunned state-sponsored exhibitions and revolutionized French painting.

Now the Paris Internationale art fair, which launched last year, is offering an edgy alternative to the 43-year-old FIAC, or, in English, International Fair of Contemporary Art. Timed to coincide with FIAC, the ingénue is stealing some of the grande dame's thunder.

FIAC is still much bigger. This year's edition, from Oct. 20 to 23 (with a VIP preview on Oct. 19), has 189 exhibitors. Paris Internationale, which opens one day earlier, has grown from its 34-gallery debut to 54 galleries from around the world. The fair is taking over the five-floor former residence of Calouste Gulbenkian, a 20th-century oil magnate and art collector.

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The fair was created by owners at four young galleries from Paris and one from Zurich. It has positioned itself as a

hipper, cheaper alternative for both collectors and newer galleries, which “are expected to participate in art fairs,” said Marie Lusa, partner at Zurich gallery Gregor Staiger. She added, “But when a booth costs more than the artwork you are selling, that doesn’t add up.” Galerie Gregor Staiger co-founded Paris Internationale after applying unsuccessfully to a section of FIAC with subsidized booths reserved for young galleries.

FIAC director Jennifer Flay sees Paris Internationale as “a major game-changer,” if not direct competition. “One of the reasons it was created is because certain galleries were not accepted,” she said. “But that’s a healthy move.”

At Paris Internationale, work by up-and-comers tends to be in the price range of \$5,000 to \$10,000. New York-based collector Michael Hort, who shopped the fair last year and plans to return, said: “It reminds me of the way things used to be, when art was accessible and galleries could take chances.”

Here are five notable Paris Internationale artists and their galleries:

Nicolas Party at Galerie

Gregor Staiger, Zurich: Inspired by ancient Roman frescoes, the former graffiti artist has used spray paint, pastels and oils to create a wall painting of a surreal grotto filled with grotesque floral and fauna. Looming over the fair from the top of a grand marble staircase, the mural isn’t for sale—and must be painted over at the end of the fair. The gallery hopes that the mural will lead to commissions for the Swiss artist, whose work is now on view at the Dallas Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

Daiga Grantina at

Joseph Tang, Paris: This

Latvian-born, Paris-based artist melts, stretches and bends found



Daiga Grantina's 'Buff in Bloom, Glow and Thumos' (2016) at Paris Internationale 2016 PHOTO: GALERIE JOSEPH TANG, PARIS

objects, industrial plastics and other synthetics into shapes that appear to droop, drip and decay before our eyes. At the fair, her trio of hanging sculptures in flesh-colored Lycra, priced at about \$9,900 each, evoke Greek mythology's Three Graces, goddesses who represent beauty, charm and joyfulness.

Agustin Fernandez at Mitchell Algu, New

York: A surprise find at a fair dominated by emerging artists, this Cuban-born painter (1928-2006) has work at New York's Museum of Modern Art and London's Victoria & Albert Museum. Fernandez is a star in Cuba, and his art is ripe for rediscovery. His artwork on view dates from the 1960s to 1990s, including erotic paintings and drawings of human anatomy that approach abstraction.

Kamrooz Aram at Green Gallery, Dubai: Born in Iran, the Brooklyn-based artist uses painting, drawing, collage and installations to comment on how Western cultures have dealt with traditional, non-Western art. His collages on view at Paris Internationale feature black-and-white photos of ancient Iranian masks and pottery cut out



Agustin Fernandez 'Untitled' (1995) PHOTO: MITCHELL ALGUS GALLERY AND AGUSTIN FERNANDEZ FOUNDATION

from 20th-century art-history textbooks and pasted onto modernist geometric backgrounds. Mr. Aram's first European solo museum show opens at Belgium's Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in February.

Jean-Marie Appriou at Jan Kaps, Cologne, Germany: Using older techniques like pottery, stonecutting and glassblowing, Mr. Appriou creates crude figures and forms that are creepy but not without humor. The aluminum sculptures at Paris Internationale have a decidedly mystical vibe. Part of a new body of work loosely inspired by tarot-card symbols, two larger-than-life silvery hands, each selling for about \$16,500, offer an assortment of leaves, flowers and berries that have been embellished with gold.



Kamrooz Aram's 'Untitled' (2016), (from the series Ancient Through Modern 23) PHOTO: KAMROOZ ARAM/GREEN ART GALLERY, DUBAI

Jean Marie Appriou's 'Jenna1' (2016) PHOTO: JAN KAPS, COLOGNE



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