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# Get Out Your Checkbook, It's Frieze Week-Month in Manhattan

As buyers and galleries arrived for the annual spring fair, and its many attendant events, the hype was slightly muted; though the sales were still happening, if you knew where to look.

BY NATE FREEMAN

MAY 19, 2023



**F**rieze New York arrived on Randall's Island 11 years ago with great fanfare. Its 125,000-square-foot tent was billed as the biggest in the world; Gagosian quickly sold out its solo booth of **Rudolf Stingel** works; and **Mark Ruffalo** put on an apron and grilled sausages with **Gavin Brown** all day long out of a booth as part of a **Rirkrit Tiravanija** performance. A new singer named **Lana Del Rey** performed at a Frieze dinner sponsored by Mulberry, with **Alexa Chung** and **Fabrizio Moretti** watching on. It was, incidentally, **the stretch of vintage 2012 New York City later depicted in the film *Uncut Gems***. And for Frieze, which the writers **Matthew Slotover** and **Amanda Sharp** started as a shoestring arts magazine in 1991, opening a New York fair was a stratospheric leap into the big leagues.

Now Frieze is owned by Endeavor, the content behemoth that recently purchased a performance art enterprise known as World Wrestling Entertainment for the tidy little sum of \$9.3 billion. In addition to its original London fair and the one in New York, Frieze has outposts in Los Angeles and Seoul. And what used to be called "Frieze Week" in NYC now consists of dozens of non-Frieze, must-hit entities: satellite fairs, fancy-schmancy galas, blowout gallery dinners, openings at The Met and the Whitney, \$180 million arts facilities **popping up** in Brooklyn, and not to mention a few billion dollars' worth of art up for sale at auction. But amid a trembling economic picture in 2023...would there be anyone to buy it all?

Another difference between 2012 and today: Frieze Week is really three weeks long, with many Europeans opting to rent apartments

for weeks at a time in order to not miss a single event. Let's recap the last few weeks, shall we? On May 4, Gagosian opened a show of photos by Richard Avedon, timed to drop right at the centenary of the late photographer's birth, and asked a slew of luminaries—**Hillary Clinton, Elton John, Kim Kardashian, Brooke Shields, Emma Watson, Chloë Sevigny, Sofia Coppola, Ava DuVernay, Tom Ford, Miuccia Prada**—to pick a favorite Avedon to install at its West 21st Street space. **An after-party at the Boom Boom Room ensued.** **Vivi Nevo** posed for pictures with **Eve Jobs**.

The following evening, billionaire **Peter Brant** held a black-tie function at his East Village art foundation—formerly Walter De Maria's studio, a gigantic gut-reno'd, century-old Con Ed substation—to celebrate a show of all his Warhol masterpieces, including *Twelve Electric Chairs* and *Shot Light Blue Marilyn*, a different version of the work that sold for \$195 million last year at Christie's. The show is sponsored by Tiffany, which opened its new Fifth Avenue flagship during Manhattan's biggest art week of the year, **revealing its "Tiffany blue" Basquiat** and a slew of large-scale artworks courtesy of Tiffany's owner, the mega-collector **Bernard Arnault**. Breakfast at Tiffany's now comes with a view of works by **Rashid Johnson, Jenny Holzer, Anna Weyant,** and **Damien Hirst**.

The fairs began in earnest the following week. Independent used to act as a sister fair to the Armory Show, the traditional New York art fair before the British invasion, but now it's opted to instead show adjacent to Frieze. Independent alights on multiple floors of Spring Studios in Tribeca, drawing collectors like **Don** and **Mera Rubell**, **Shelley** and **Phil Aarons**, and **Jill** and **Peter Kraus**. Globe-trotting museum directors **Hans Ulrich Obrist** and **Klaus Biesenbach** were on hand as well, and those who opted for lunch around the corner at Frenchette saw perhaps the biggest star in Gotham this spring: **E. Jean Carroll**, celebrating **a certain legal victory**.

Some 70 blocks uptown at the Park Avenue Armory, at exactly the same time, was the New York offshoot of TEFAF, the grand old fair held each March for an entire week in the ancient Dutch city of Maastricht. Billionaire space-exploring Basquiat buyer **Yusaku Maezawa** chilled in the booth of furniture dealer **Patrick Seguin**, while cool parents **Scarlett Johansson** and **Colin Jost** circulated through the aisles. Current CNN anchor **Anderson Cooper** was there, and former CNN anchor **Don Lemon** was there. The works in the booths were a bit pricier than those at the fair downtown—White Cube sold an Alexander Calder for \$1.1 million, and Almine Rech sold an untitled Günther Förg from 2008 that had an asking price of \$1.4 million.

A dozen blocks south, at the same time that TEFAF was kicking off the oyster-and-Champagne-washed gala portion of the evening, Christie's was set to auction off 16 works from the collection of S.I. Newhouse, the late shepherd of this magazine and many others. In

addition to running *Vanity Fair* parent company Condé Nast, Newhouse assembled one of the greatest art collections in America, spurred along by the pugnacious acquisition strategies of master dealers Leo Castelli and **Larry Gagosian**. Gagosian was in the room Thursday—leaving his team to man the booth at TEFAF, which included work by **Peter Halley**, **Jeff Koons**, and **Richard Prince**—and watched as the bidding wars on works such as a small but punchy Francis Bacon self-portrait pushed the overall haul to \$177.8 million.

A few days later, the same crowd was back at Rockefeller Center for the Christie's 21st Century Sale, a \$100 million occasion dominated by the \$67 million brought in for Basquiat's *El Gran Espectaculo* (1983), safely over the high estimate courtesy of a few semi-covert bids from Gagosian, who ended up the underbidder, as Christie's **Vanessa Fusco** secured the lot for a client.

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On Tuesday, across the island of Manhattan and way down the West Side—right as the world's deep-pocketed dealers and collectors sat down at Sotheby's to take in a leisurely three-hour sale of \$427 million worth of art—the Whitney hosted an intimate dinner for its annual gala, where, in the small sixth-floor viewing room, **CeeLo**

**Green** came out to surprise the members of the board of trustees, who dutifully jumped out of their seats to dance before heading downstairs to the bigger lobby party, which was DJ'd by **The Dare**, who performed his entire set while standing in the middle of a gigantic bucket of paint.

**F**rieze finally opened this week at The Shed, the \$500 million performance venue in Hudson Yards, which sits next to the Vessel, **Thomas Heatherwick's** \$200 million structure that is closed to the public indefinitely after **a series of suicides at the location.**

For all of the apocalyptic concerns about the state of the art market coming into the fair, it seemed that sales weren't as dire as forecasted. If galleries brought good artwork that collectors wanted, it sold. Hauser & Wirth found a buyer for a historic Jack Whitten for \$2.5 million, and Pace sold out its booth of **Robert Nava** paintings. Zwirner nearly sold out its booth of **Suzan Frecon** paintings on the first day; Matthew Marks sold large wall works by **Alex Da Corte**; and Gagosian's booth of photo-collage pieces by Oscar nominee **Nan Goldin** wowed and sold works accordingly. And if we're worried that people are terrified of spending money on things, a few hours into Frieze New York, across Manhattan on York Avenue, former Romanian ambassador **Alfred Moses** spent **\$38 million** on what's said to be the oldest Hebrew Bible in existence, which he will donate to the ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv.

And sure, there was a bit less Tinseltown celeb-spotting than at Frieze Los Angeles, but fairgoers did watch a halfway-incognito **Chris Rock** sneak into the booth of LA's David Kordansky Gallery and snatch up a new work by **Lauren Halsey**, who currently has a gigantic installation on the rooftop of The Met.

There's still a lot of Frieze Week after the Frieze VIP preview. Thursday had people heading up to Harlem for the opening of African art fair 1-54 New York, or over to Chelsea for NADA New York in a space once occupied by Dia. After sales at Christie's and Phillips Wednesday, Sotheby's rolled out the carpet for The Now, its sale of work by living artists, which sported a **Yoshitomo Nara** painting with a \$18 million high estimate as its top lot. Unfortunately, the consignor withdrew the painting hours before the sale, ostensibly due to a lack of interest from collectors. Can you blame them? Those at Sotheby's and on the phone had presumably been spending money nonstop for weeks.

Maybe some simply decided to spend their Thursdays downtown instead. The Bay Area collector **Komal Shah** hosted a swanky party at the Bowery Hotel. During remarks, she seemed genuinely surprised at the turnout of art world A-listers.

"I know how busy it is in New York, so I can't believe how many museum directors are here," she said as plates of truffle fries circulated through the crowd that included **Lisa Phillips** from the New Museum, **Ann Philbin** from the Hammer, **Alison Gass** from the ICA San Francisco, and **Asma Naeem** from the Baltimore

## Museum of Art.

Another pleasant surprise was a very serious fair with an extremely silly name: That '70s Show. No, it has nothing to do with the **Topher Grace–Ashton Kutcher** sitcom; it's just a cool micro-fair where local galleries brought a few works and installed them in **Eric Firestone**'s two loft-through spaces at 4 Great Jones Street. All the works in the show were made in the 1970s, many of them by artists who lived in the neighborhood, in SoHo and NoHo, in semi-legal apartments.

As pleasant as it was, I had to ask Firestone how he convinced dealers such as Andrew Kreps and Anton Kern and Kasmin and PPOW—how did he convince them to do *another* art fair?

“I don't even know if this is a fair. We just wanted to do some new shit,” Firestone said. “I had the spaces open. We just wanted to shake things up and get back to the neighborhood.”

## The Rundown

*Your crib sheet for comings and goings in the art world this week and beyond...*

...**Jim Carrey**, the actor, is also an artist, last seen exhibiting works at Maccarone in Los Angeles. When he put his house on the market last February, it was revealed that he lives with his own artwork installed on the walls. Like, *a lot* of his own artwork. Which is why it was a bit of a surprise that Phillips received on consignment this



season works by **Anish Kapoor** and **Jeppe Hein** that were clearly marked as “Property From the Jim Carrey Collection.” Maybe those *Sonic the Hedgehog* checks aren’t hitting like they used to? Regardless, the works did great, with the two Kapoors selling for a combined \$1.6 million and the Hein adding an extra \$120,000.

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...Another interesting nugget from the sale catalogs: In looking at the provenance of a Robert Colescott that was estimated to sell for a high estimate of \$700,000, it appears that the collectors who originally bought the 1991 work from Phyllis Kind Gallery were, as stated in the catalog, “**Camille O. and William H. Cosby, Jr.**” That’s right, Bill Cosby owned the work for decades; it was included in a show of Cosby’s collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, but was eventually sold to the consignor through Alexandre Fine Art. The work failed to find a buyer Wednesday night.

...The art novel of the moment is most certainly **Emma Cline’s** *The Guest*, which was published this week. Its antiheroine is a mysterious young woman who is dating a secondary dealer, and finds herself on an odyssey between the homes of collectors in the Hamptons, with her sanity and reputation teetering on the brink. It’s a delicious read and a fascinating milieu to inhabit—highly recommended. Appropriately enough, Cline also runs the Picture

Books imprint for Gagosian, a series that pairs a writer with an artist for dual publications.

...Even a dozen fairs and a hundred openings could not distract art world denizens from the juiciest gossip of the week. In two separate lawsuits, top collector **Candace Carmel Barasch** is going after **Lisa Schiff**, the art adviser with a fully staffed office-slash-gallery in Tribeca and who is best known for once representing **Leonardo DiCaprio**. As recently as 2019, Barasch referred to Schiff as her “partner in crime.” The lawsuits—the first filed along with collector **Richard Grossman** and his spouse; the second filed with Barasch’s husband, **Michael**—allege that Schiff earmarked funds Barasch gave her for art for her own personal use and failed to pay the galleries what they were owed. This week Schiff declared bankruptcy. The suits are already a doozy, and apparently the fallout is just beginning. “Unfortunately, as the fraud is uncovered, we are seeing a ripple effect throughout the art world,” said **Wendy Lindstrom**, a lawyer for Barasch and her husband. “The victims appear to be widespread—artists, galleries, and collectors.” Schiff did not immediately respond to a request for comment.