

What Sold So Far at Frieze Masters 2016?

Sales slowed down on day two.

Amah-Rose Abrams, October 7, 2016



Fausto Melotti, *Piccolo museo sull'acqua* (*Little Museum on the Water*) (1979). Photo courtesy Hauser & Wirth

There has been much tension in the air regarding the current political climate in England in the lead up to Frieze. When set against the backdrop of some of the most tumultuous times in recent years, the question was whether or not, and how, would current affairs affect sales. In the case of Frieze 2016 and the complementing auctions here in London, this has manifested in measured—but strong—sales, with works changing hands within minutes of Frieze Masters opening its doors on preview day.

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Collectors are in town and in many cases know exactly what they are looking for. Preview day saw collectors shuttling it between the two tents in an attempt to secure the works they had their hearts set on. But in terms of sales, on preview day at least, more deals were

being closed at Frieze Masters, where the atmosphere seemed more serious with less eye-popping booths and more deliberate shopping.



Takesada Matsutani, *Work-B-62* (1962). Photo courtesy Hauser & Wirth.

There was much discussion as to whether this was a combination of American and European collectors wanting to buy due to the weak pound this week. Or whether the insecure political and financial climates around the world are pushing collectors to make safe purchases, more guaranteed to hold their value.

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Prices haven't been that high and some of the star items this year, like the three Picassos brought by Helly Nahmad and the stunning Magritte on sale at Dickinson Gallery, have yet to change hands at publication time, although discussions were being had.

There was a strong presence from collectors with François Pinault coming to the Jeff Koons preview at Almine Rech on Tuesday and almost every dealer at the fair stating how thrilled they were at the quality of collectors present, regardless of whether they had sold or not.

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There were also the usual celebrity spottings including outgoing director of Tate and incoming head of Arts Council England Nicholas Serota closely inspecting works at Hauser & Wirth's booth, and English actor Eddie Redmayne on a family outing with his wife and child.

First day sales kicked off before the preview had even started with New York's Mnuchin Gallery selling Bridget Riley's *Delos* (1983) for £1.5 million in the early hours of preview day, and Marlborough Fine Art selling a £1 million worth of Paula Rego works in the first two hours of the fair. Mnuchin also later sold Sean Scully's *Gate* (1997).



Mayor Gallery at Frieze Masters. Photo artnet News

Super gallery Hauser & Wirth did extremely well on preview day selling a small Alexander Calder work for \$600,000, a Takesada Matsutani *Work-B-62*(1962) for \$450,000, a Fausto Melotti sculpture *Little Museum on the Water*(1979) for €300,000, and a Francis Picabia painting for \$220,000. Also sold on the preview day for Hauser & Wirth were two Marlene Dumas drawings for \$45,000 each, a series of works by Cy Twombly for an undisclosed sum, one of the Philip Guston works and a Dieter Roth cheese painting for over half a million dollars.

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Pace Gallery also sold a dozen works on the first day, by Lucas Samaras for \$30,000-\$40,000. David Zwirner sold well with collectors walking away with a Ruth Asawa 1960s hanging sculpture, two works by Josef Albers, and works by Sherrie Levine, and Sigmar Polke. Amsterdam and Geneva based gallery Saloman Lilian also sold *A Still Life with Asparagus* (c.1697) by Monogrammist O.M for £100,000.

New York based Mayor Gallery did well selling half their solo stand of Dutch artist Ad Dekkers at prices ranging from €50,000- €100,000, as did London's Jonathan Clark Fine Art who sold a range of works by Eduardo Paolozzi for £4,000 up to ten times that, at £40,000.

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Dealers bringing antiquities and rare books also did well at the fair on the first day with London dealer Daniel Crouch Rare Books selling an enormous and fascinating map of London by John Rocque made in 1799, “*A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark...*” for £75,000.

Rupert Wace Ancient Art, based in London, sold a Bactrian striated marble disc from 2000 BC for £15,000, and Cahn International from Basel sold a rare and very early Corinthian helmet for £175,000, while Raccanello Leprince from London sold an Urbino 16th century Istoriatedo dish for over £50,000.



Frank Stella at Sprüth Magers, Dominique Levy, and Marianne Boesky Gallery. Photo artnet News
After this slew of announced sales on Wednesday, Thursday was a great deal quieter although many dealers including Bernard Jacobson who presented a great booth of works by Robert Motherwell reported interest and reserves but no sales. However, deals were being struck as Ben Brown Fine Arts got in touch with the confirmed sale of four Tony Bevan works. With others such as rare book and manuscript dealer Les Enluminures, and Italian and Swiss based dealer Robilant & Voena reporting sales but unwilling to disclose details.

In other news on the second day, the combined efforts of Sprüth Magers, Dominique Levy, and Marianne Boesky Gallery paid off as they sold one of their stunning Frank Stella works for an undisclosed sum.

Frieze Masters appears to be off to a good start but it will take the weekend to truly get a picture of sales performance. In terms of enthusiasm and atmosphere, however, this is one of the best years yet.

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