

INTERNATIONAL ARTS

Frieze Week Descends on London

By SCOTT REYBURN OCT. 10, 2014

LONDON — With nine fairs, seven auctions, and more than 150 selling exhibitions in galleries, London’s “Frieze Week,” which starts Monday, is a hectic seven days in the art world. So many events jostle for attention, that it can be difficult for visiting collectors to decide where to spend their time, not to mention their money.

“It’s almost too much for them to take on board,” said Anthony McNerney, director of contemporary art at the London-based advisers Gurr Johns. “But clients feel they need to come. They’ll go to Frieze to check prices and see if they can engage in something good and new.”

The main focus of the week, the [Frieze](#) Art Fair itself, held, as usual, in a temporary structure in Regent’s Park, opens its 12th edition to V.I.P.s on Tuesday, following Christie’s evening auction in London of 44 contemporary works from the Essl Collection in Austria. The fair opens to the public on Wednesday, and runs through Saturday.

This year’s cast list of 162 dealers from 25 countries has been freshened up by a new “Live” element, which will see performance-based installations (also on-trend at this year’s [Art Basel](#)) scattered through the fair. Frieze’s curated “Focus” section of younger galleries has expanded to 37.



Francis Bacon’s “Seated Figure (Red Cardinal),” which will be on display at Christie’s in London from Oct. 14 to 16. [Credit Christie’s](#)

Frieze has built its reputation on selling new art by younger artists — the sector where investment-minded collectors can make spectacular returns on works bought for under 50,000 pounds, or about \$80,000.

Prices tend to be higher at [Frieze Masters](#), the fair’s sister event in Regent’s Park, whose third edition will also be previewing on Tuesday and runs through Sunday. Here, 127 dealers will be showing modern and historic material ranging across seven millennia.

“Contemporary art is easier. People feel more connected to it, but they are now looking at art from different ages,” said the California- and Texas-based collector and heritage philanthropist Suzanne Deal Booth, who will be giving a talk about so-called “crossover” buying at Frieze Masters on Thursday.



Rembrandt’s “Portrait of a Man With Arms Akimbo,” which will be on sale at Frieze Masters with Otto Naumann. [CreditOtto Naumann, Ltd.](#)

Ms. Deal Booth is one of a select number of international collectors who are as confident buying art from the 16th century as they are from the 21st. “Crossover collecting is all about being impassioned about art and relying on one’s own perceptions,” she said.

So far, though, black-clad Friezanistas have been tentative about buying historic works at Masters. At last year’s edition, the New York-based gallerist Otto

Naumann sold just one painting, priced at \$150,000. This year he will be asking \$48.5 million for Rembrandt’s 1658 “Portrait of a Man With Arms Akimbo,” which he acquired privately from the American casino magnate [Stephen A. Wynn](#) after his divorce from his wife Elaine Wynn [in 2010](#). “I just hope Roman Abramovich will get out of the other tent and come and have a look at it,” Mr. Naumann said.

Other attractions for oligarchs and their ilk at Frieze Masters will include a monographic display of some 10 Francis Bacon works at the booth of Marlborough Fine Art — including two figure paintings from the 1980s, each marked between \$25 million to \$30 million — and the 1965 Pablo Picasso painting “Homme et Femme Nue,” presented by the London dealer Faggionato at about \$19 million.



A work by Paolo Scheggi showing at Robilant + Voena. [CreditRobilant + Voena](#)

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Once the two Friezes have been ticked off the to-do list, where next for the courtesy BMW? Buyers and browsers at the upper end of the market will head to the boutique [Pavilion of Art and Design fair](#), or PAD, in Berkeley Square, where the Zurich-based Galerie von Vertes is offering a 1985 Gerhard Richter abstract at £2.9 million.

Those in search of something less familiar might try the [1:54](#) fair of contemporary African art in the 18th-century splendor of Somerset House. Reflecting growing interest in Africa as an art market region, this year's second edition has expanded from 15 to 27 dealers, 11 of whom are based in Africa. The London-based exhibitor Jack Bell is asking between £10,000 and £30,000 each for two works by the Cameroon-based painter Boris Nzebo, featured in the Saatchi Gallery's current "Pangaea: New Art from Africa and Latin America" show (through Nov. 2). PAD and 1:54 both run through Sunday.

"Stars will come out of Africa, it's only a matter of time," said the New York-based collector and publisher Larry Warsh, who is flying in for Frieze and the non-selling Ai Weiwei show at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. "And talented artists are easier to recognize. The hype machine isn't so developed there."



A work by Aiko Miyanaga, who has an exhibition at the new London gallery White Rainbow. Credit Leo Bieber
And then there are the gallery shows. The Mayfair dealers Robilant + Voena have put on a comprehensive survey of the "forgotten" 1960s Italian conceptual artist Paolo Scheggi, who died at just 31 in 1971. His multilayered monochrome abstracts, reminiscent of Lucio Fontana, but

with a technique and ideology all their own, were rediscovered by the market last October when a 1965 painting estimated by Christie's at £20,000 to £30,000 sold for £218,500. Robilant + Voena are showing 33 works, about a third of which are for sale, priced at €200,000 to €500,000.

The award-winning Japanese artist Aiko Miyanaga (born 1974) uses ephemeral materials such as naphthalene — the traditional ingredient of mothballs — to make haunting sculptures about transience. Her show "Strata: Origins" inaugurated the new Japanese gallery White Rainbow in London's Fitzrovia district on Oct. 7. Prices here range from about £1,500 to £32,000. Listen up for Ms. Miyanaga's Song dynasty-style ceramic bowls whose mutating glazes do, quite literally, crack before your ears.

"Frieze Week isn't just about Frieze," said Mr. McNerney of Gurr Johns, who was at the packed White Rainbow preview. "It's also about the periphery. The ethos of the week is emerging art."

As well as holding sales that are estimated to raise as much as £263.7 million, the auction houses are using Frieze Week as an

opportunity to promote works they are selling elsewhere in the world.

From Tuesday to Thursday, Christie's London will be exhibiting the 1960 Francis Bacon painting, "Seated Figure (Red Cardinal)," which has just been entered into their sale of postwar and contemporary art in New York on Nov. 12.

Estimated at \$40 million to \$60 million, the 5-foot-high canvas is part of Bacon's celebrated series of paintings inspired by Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X. This particular composition last appeared on the auction market at Christie's, London, in 1996, when it was bought for £1.5 million by its current owner, known to be the low-profile Belgian collector Pierre Salik, according to four dealers who asked not to be named.

Christie's said the painting hasn't been guaranteed a minimum price. This suggests the seller is confident there are buyers still looking for big-ticket Bacons in the aftermath of the [\\$142.4 million paid](#) by Elaine Wynn for the artist's 1969 "Three Studies of Lucian Freud" at Christie's in New York last November. At least five bidders, including two from Asia, were prepared to pay more than \$100 million for that triptych.