

# LONDON ART FAIR



## London Art Fair 2019 reports robust sales for modern and contemporary art despite Brexit uncertainty



Conspired: Masterpiece by Biggs & Collings (2019) on show at London Art Fair 2019. Courtesy of Vigo Gallery.  
Works from Towner Art Gallery, Museum Partner for London Art Fair 2019. Credit: Charlotte Swinburn Photographer.

London Art Fair concluded its 31st edition on Sunday 20 January, reporting robust sales across modern and contemporary art and welcoming over 20,000 international visitors and collectors, despite uncertainty over Brexit. The Fair opened with a Preview Evening on Tuesday 15 January, when collectors, curators, artists and art enthusiasts enjoyed an exclusive first look at presentations by 130 leading galleries from 16 different countries, brought together under one roof at the Business Design Centre.

Sarah Monk, Director of London Art Fair, said: *"As with every year, our aim is to provide a space to showcase the most exceptional modern and contemporary art of our time and, in association with new headline sponsor IG, the 2019 edition demonstrated our continued good health and strong marker of intent for the future. We celebrate our heritage through initiatives such as our annual Museum Partnership; whilst also embracing change and disruption through our curated sections Art Projects and Dialogues, and through the evolution of new features such as Platform which feed our visitors' and collectors' appetite for discovery."*

Zavier Ellis, Director of Charlie Smith London, said: *"We had a superb opening night, selling five out of our seven artists to all new collectors. We have placed work each day and have also had significant interest from prominent British curators. My opinion is that London Art Fair continues to evolve and is the only fair that can offer a profound survey of the relationship between Modern and Contemporary British art."*

Víctor Lope, Director of Victor Lope Arte Contemporaneo, said: *"It has been our best opening at London Art Fair. We sold several to different collectors, from England, Turkey, the Netherlands and Scotland. We sold works by German artist Dirk Salz and Spanish artist Patrik Grijalvo, and sculptures by Basque artist Iñigo Arregi. Also museum curators showed interest in the works of Spanish artist Concha Martínez Barreto and Danish artist Maria Torp. We are now in conversations about a commissioned sculpture by Jacinto Moros."*

## PRESS RELEASE

# LONDON ART FAIR

London Art Fair welcomed back many returning galleries for its 2019 edition as well as several new additions from the UK, Europe and from several countries further afield including South Korea, Japan, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Canada. Galleries at all levels of the market saw strong sales across the week – both in the Main Fair and the specially curated sections – with artworks being placed in major private and corporate collections and national institutions.

Galleries specialising in Modern British art, which has long been celebrated as a strength of the Fair, voiced strong support from international collectors. Christopher Kingzett Fine Art sold a bronze maquette by Elisabeth Frink (*St Edmund*, 1976, right) for £38,000; Alan Wheatley Art recorded fantastic sales of works by both Alan Davie and Adrian Heath, mainly to new clients; and Crane Kalman Gallery sold a selection of L. S. Lowry drawings and an oil painting for a six-figure sum. Meanwhile, Kynance Fine Art sold a pencil and watercolour design for a dinner plate by Vanessa Bell (*Portrait of George Eliot*, 1932/33), to a buyer in Saudi Arabia, and an early Kenneth Martin work on paper that has rarely been seen on the market.



Healthy sales of Modern British artists were also reported by Osborne Samuel, who sold a major work by Alan Reynolds (*Sunrise*, 1956) for £130,000, and Brownsword Hepworth, who sold an important Keith Vaughan painting for a six-figure sum, both sales taking place on the Preview Evening. The Nine British Art were delighted to sell a total of six oil paintings by Frank Avray Wilson for upwards of £80,000. Twentieth-century artists from the other side of the Atlantic were also popular at the Fair, with Gilden's Art Gallery selling significant works by Sam Francis and Roy Lichtenstein on the gallery's tenth appearance at the Fair.

London Art Fair 2019 demonstrated that confidence in the contemporary art market is also high, with galleries voicing strong support from collectors, museum curators and institutions, across a range of media including painting, printmaking, photography and applied arts. The Fair's brand new *Platform* section – which for its first edition took the medium of ceramics as its focus – received critical acclaim and provided evidence of the burgeoning market for ceramic art. Castlegate House Gallery sold Grayson Perry's *Fucking Art Centre*, originally created for a Battersea Arts Centre auction, to a significant UK collector for in excess of £50,000. Other ceramic works sold include a Salvador Dali from Sylvia Powell and works by Dame Lucie Rie and Annette Lindeberg at Askew Art.



Exhibiting in the Fair's *Art Projects* section for their third year, Gibbons and Nicholas had a sell-out show for Irish painter Sean Molloy (left), placing his works in a major corporate collection and in notable private collections. As a result of connections made at the Fair, the artist has been offered exhibitions in London and Italy. Meanwhile, Skipwiths & CAIS Gallery, championing both established and emerging Korean artists, sold at least one work by each of the six artists on their stand, including an abstract painting by Korean artist Young Chun from his 'Aggregation' series for £14,000.

## PRESS RELEASE

# LONDON ART FAIR

IG

Prints specialist, JEALOUS, sold out of the first three tiers of David Shrigley's new edition, *My Rampage is Over* (priced at £590, £890 and £1,200 respectively), while a portion of the sales from Chris Levine's *Lightness of Being E/JAF Edition* (£3,195) have gone to the Elton John Aids Foundation. Stoney Road Press placed one of Irish printmaker James Kennedy's 'Transpositions' prints into the British Museum's collection.

Photography was also a popular medium at London Art Fair 2019, with DOMOBAAAL selling a work by Nicky Hirst to a major UK public institution, and Maddox Arts selling one of Spanish artist Dionisio Gonzalez's futuristic architectural landscapes, *Heliopolis*, for £12,000. Photographs by Cuban-American artist Jesse Fernandez, presented at (S)ITOR, was very well-received, notably among prominent collectors based in London and Paris. Additional sales of contemporary Latin American artists – the focus of this year's *Dialogues* section – include a photograph by Argentinian artist Marcelo Brodsky (Rolf Art) to Latin American art collector, Catherine Petitgas, reflecting the growing market for contemporary art from the region.

Taking place in the run-up to Britain's departure from the European Union, London Art Fair 2019 provided a timely insight into the state of the UK art market in 2019. Healthy sales across the board indicated that London continues to be open for business and is still a major player in the international art market. While political uncertainties may not have had a bearing on sales, they did provide inspiration for many artists exhibiting at the Fair, including British-Bulgarian artist Yanko Tihov, whose *Europe 2019* (right) was sold by TAG Fine Arts to a UK collector.



## Curated Sections

London Art Fair 2019 once again traced the evolution of the art market through its curated spaces Photo50 and Art Projects. The De'Longhi Art Projects Artist Award 2019 was won by artist Kimathi Donkor who is represented by Ed Cross Fine Art, one of the 33 galleries from 11 countries included in *Art Projects*, a curated platform for emerging galleries to showcase innovative contemporary art from across the globe. Featured within *Art Projects* were six unique collaborations, known as *Dialogues*, with pairs of galleries invited to display their artists in conversation with each other. This year, *Dialogues* was curated by Kiki Mazzucchelli, and explored the various correspondences between the work of contemporary artists from Latin America and Europe.

This year's Photo50 exhibition, *Who's looking at the family, now?*, was curated by Tim Clark and engaged with fundamental questions about family life, its dynamics and complexity, as represented by a group of 14 international photographers. Renowned British and Irish artists David Moore, Trish Morrissey and Léonie Hampton were exhibited alongside artists whose work was on display for the first time in London, including Mexico City-based Mariela Sancari, Thai-born artist Alba Zari, Amak Mahmoodian from Iran and Lebohang Kganye from South Africa.

London Art Fair's Museum Partner for its 2019 edition was Eastbourne's Towner Art Gallery, who presented stand-out works from their evolving collection of modern and contemporary art by artists including Eric Ravilious, Gertrude Hermes and Wolfgang Tillmans. Joe Hill, director of the gallery and curator of 'The Living Collection', said: "It has been a pleasure to work with London Art Fair on the Museum Partner programme for 2019. The opportunity to showcase the Towner Collection to visitors and exhibitors of the fair has been key to developing the profile of the gallery as we approach our hundredth anniversary in 2020."

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### New Visual Identity for 2019

The 30th anniversary of London Art Fair in 2018 provided the perfect opportunity for the Fair to challenge its existing identity and ensure that it remains relevant to collectors and visitors alike. Now in its 31st year, the Fair's refreshed visual identity, conceived by Studio Thomas, reflects the idea that London Art Fair is a platform for both established and emerging artists and gallerists from around the world, with a focus on letting the art speak for itself.

### NOTES TO EDITORS

#### LONDON ART FAIR

16 - 20 January 2019 (Preview 15 January)

Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0QH

[www.londonartfair.co.uk](http://www.londonartfair.co.uk)

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#### IMAGE CREDITS

Biggs & Collings, *Conspired: Masterpiece*. Courtesy of Vigo Gallery and Robert Upstone Ltd. Credit: Charlotte Swinburn Photographer.

Works from Towner Art Gallery, Museum Partner for London Art Fair 2019. Credit: Charlotte Swinburn Photographer.

Elisabeth Frink, *St Edmund*, 1976. Courtesy of Christopher Kingzett Fine Art.

Seán Molloy, *Landscape with Penitent*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and Gibbons and Nicholas.

Yanko Tihov, *Europe 2019 (Blue Britain)*, at TAG Fine Arts. Credit: Charlotte Swinburn Photographer.

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 Sylvia Powell  
 TAG Fine Arts  
 The Drawing Works  
 The Nine British Art  
 The Redfern Gallery  
 The Scottish Gallery  
 Thompson's Galleries  
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**ART PROJECTS**

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London Art Fair was delighted to welcome IG, the world-leading provider of trading and investments, as a headline sponsor for 2019. Elaine Bramall, Head of Marketing, UK, said: *"At IG we are delighted to have been given the opportunity to sponsor the London Art Fair 2019, we're proud to support upcoming and established artists from around the world. The passion and dedication we see in the artists' work echoes our passion and dedication to our clients and we're very excited to see this relationship grow."*

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