

FRIEZE LA

Sunday February 17th, 2019

# THE CANVAS

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## Industry Consensus: Inaugural Frieze LA a Success

The Canvas might have spoken too soon on Friday. Whether it was the fatigue, the rolling bands of rain, or just plain old grumpiness that caused our negativity is hard to say. Certainly, there's no disputing that Frieze got off to a rough start with its debut iteration in the City of Angels. What we reported earlier was all true- a roiling antipathy has formed amongst both collectors and dealers regarding Frieze organizers' handling of parking, ticketing, seating space in the tent, and of course, the weather. However, all in all, most dealers The Canvas spoke to reported strong- if not spectacular- sales throughout the weekend.

Sticking to the weather for a (brief) second, it's time for **Amanda, Matthew, Victoria**, and the rest of the team they've assembled at Frieze, to seriously consider abandoning the fair's signature white tent. At some point- and it was probably two years ago at Frieze NY if we're being completely honest- the tent becomes a hindrance to the brand rather than a cool identifier. Indeed, on the fair's VIP day, The Canvas overheard one prominent collector describe the fair's atmosphere "as kind of like a

Hamptons art fair" while on the phone with her friend. That's not a good thing folks. In these climate changing times we live in- and with both **Art Basel** and **TEFAF** placing a premium on their attendees' comfort and VIP spaces- Frieze takes an unnecessary gamble each year it chooses to stage the fair in a makeshift tent that relies on ideal weather conditions in order for things to run without a hitch.

When we asked **Victoria Siddall** in the February edition of [The Canvas Monthly](#) how Frieze plans to distinguish itself from its competitors in an increasingly crowded fair environment, one of the differentiators she listed was the fair's "roots in editorial". That's great. And those roots certainly show in the fair's programming which was admittedly thought-provoking, Instagram-inducing, and innovative in its use of the Paramount Studios backlot. But those same roots also show in the organizers' handling of the more mundane aspects of running a fair that's intended to be a must-stop visit on the international circuit. It's high time to either revamp the operations team, or look for more traditional venues with the accompanying 'luxuries'- like central air conditioning and a walk to the fair that doesn't require olympic-worthy feats of vaulting over five-foot wide puddles in order to make it inside with one's shoes intact.

However, with that said, the opening day hiccups didn't seem to have a material impact on sales. While buying of course peaked on the VIP day and wasn't particularly sustained throughout the weekend- a trend that is proving true for most fairs with the exception of **TEFAF**, **Art Basel in Basel**, and perhaps the **ADAA Art Show**- a majority of dealers The Canvas spoke to were happy with their booth's results. **Marc Payot** of **Hauser & Wirth** told us he saw a great flow of collectors and curators stop by the gallery's booth. "Given as this was the first year for Frieze LA, we wanted to make a statement with our presentation, and I think we accomplished that," he said.

When we asked both **David Maupin** and **David Kordansky** in this month's [The Canvas Monthly](#) what criteria they look for in a fair when deciding whether or not to participate, they each cited the existence of a

thriving community of collectors in the host-city as being one of the first things they search for. "At the end of the day, I love fairs," Maupin began. "It's an opportunity to spend more time in a community. I think of the **Dallas Art Fair** which we did once a few years ago (and might do again). I loved getting to know the community better, being able to spend more time with the curators and the collectors." Kordansky was more direct with what he and his team look for. "Opportunity is key," he told us. "I try to find the potential to either engage a new market or an existing market in a new way. I also look at the reputations of everyone involved – the organizers and the community of participants. And, energy – the ability to create an event, to keep people at the fair, and to keep people returning to the fair."

Judging by those criteria, Frieze LA was an unqualified success. In addition to Kordansky, **Lévy Gorvy**, **Hauser & Wirth**, **Pace**, **Casey Kaplan**, **Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac**, **König Galerie**, and **Blum & Poe** all reported strong sales to The Canvas; and we heard rumors of plenty more successful participants. When we buttonholed a few of the dealers to ask who exactly was making up the majority of the buyers, the answers were varied. As usual, many of A-List collectors who are regulars on the fair circuit bought for their collections. However, we also heard that a few of the celebrities-looking at you **Brad** and **Leo**- bought a piece or two. And perhaps more importantly, many dealers said that Frieze LA offered them an opportunity to interact with their West Coast clients face-to-face; and to plant a flag in the city so as to introduce their galleries to LA collectors who may not be familiar with their New York or European based galleries. While Los Angeles has long been known for its art schools; and more recently for its museums and burgeoning gallery scene, the city's collectors have remained a somewhat untapped market for many galleries.

Much has been made of the intersecting worlds of fashion and art this past decade, however, the vector at which the entertainment and art worlds meet has only more recently become a point of exploration. Both the art world and entertainment industry are centered around highly creative, highly controlling, and just plain high-strung individuals. Both worlds require such individuals to retain representatives to deal with the monetary aspects of their businesses. And both consist of insular communities who

aren't particularly welcoming to outsiders and carry their own quirks and customs in the way they operate.

This idea was concretely explored throughout Frieze LA, including its very setting on the movie sets of the Paramount Studios backlot. While haters might misjudge and turn up their noses, citing LA's reputation for shallowness and superficiality- a reputation that **Art Basel Miami Beach** deals with in its host-city as well- there was nothing fake about the quality of the art, or the depth of the bank accounts that enabled collectors to purchase these highly coveted status symbols for their walls throughout the duration of the fair. That, my friends, was as real as real can get. And The Canvas is confident that it will continue next year- albeit hopefully, with a few of the growing pains solidly in the rear-view mirror.

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#### **Public Service Announcement**

The free editions of The Canvas will next be published during the ADAA Art Show, and then the following week during Armory Week. The Canvas Monthly will be published on Wednesday March 6th and will feature in-depth interviews with **Edward Dolman**, CEO of Phillips; **Patrick van Maris**, CEO of TEFAF, **Elizabeth Dee**; **Steven Henry** of Paula Cooper Gallery, and **Annabelle Selldorf**.

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#### **Six More Must-See Booths At Frieze LA**

[Sprüth Magers \(Booth C12\)](#)

[König Galerie \(Booth D9\)](#)

Casey Kaplan (Booth C4).

David Kordansky Gallery (Booth C3).

Sadie Coles HQ (Booth C5).

Lisson Gallery (Booth B7).

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### **The Party Circuit**

RIMOWA x GARAGE Celebrate Alex Israel (**Spotted: Alex Israel, Pharrell, Alexandre Arnault, Georgia Fowler, Wendi Murdoch, Nina Dobrev, Bettina Korek, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Klaus Biesenbach, Maria Sharapova, Travis Kalanick, Jomas Wood, Michael Ovitz, Jeffrey Deitch, Mark Guiducci, Alexander Gilkes, Maurice Marciano, and Stefano Tonchi**)

David Zwirner Party: Celebrating Frieze LA (**Spotted: Paul Schimmel, Alex Israel, Michael Ovitz, Loring Randolph, Catherine Opie, Benjamin Godsill, Amy Cappellazzo, Sylvester Stallone, Lucas Zwirner, David Zwirner, Helen Molesworth, Michael Govan, and Maurice Marciano**)

Baz Luhrmann and Bombay Sapphire Celebrate Frieze LA (**Spotted: Baz Luhrmann, Rita Ora, Leonardo DiCaprio (along with his parents), Billy Zane, Asia Chow, and John Burke**)

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**Follow along on our Instagram page [here](#) as we share pictures from the Paramount Studios lot at Frieze LA, ALAC, and all the parties you couldn't swing an invite to. Don't worry- there's always next year (we hope!).**

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