



Fair Game

Arts-savvy Houston gets its due as two major art fairs debut this fall. | By Troy Schulze |

With all the talk of Houston having a world-class art scene, it may come as a surprise to learn that the city has never hosted a major international art fair, a la New York City's Armory Show or Miami's Art Basel. But that's about to change this fall when not one, but two major fairs—the Houston Fine Art Fair and Texas Contemporary—make their inaugural runs at Downtown's George R. Brown Convention Center.

First up this month is the **Houston Fine Art Fair** (Sept. 16-18, see Calendar for details), organized by Hamptons Expo Group, which also produces fairs in San Francisco, Aspen and the Hamptons. "Houston is home to extraordinary museums," says New York-based HEAF Director Fran Kaufman of the group's decision to expand, "like The Menil Collection and the Museum of Fine Arts. They're both world-renowned and incredibly well respected institutions. And then, of course, there are so many others. So that forms a base for an incredible art community." She also points out that Houston is generally a very arts-interested and arts-supportive city, home to some high-caliber public, private and corporate collections of modern and contemporary, from all over the world—which points to a local collector base with money to spend.

The HEAF presents post-war to contemporary

work—in mediums including painting, drawing, print, video, sculpture and photography—from approximately 80 galleries across the U.S., Europe and Latin America, with a special emphasis on the latter. Kaufman thought it just made sense because of Houston's well-known Latin American collections, perhaps most notably that of the Museum of Fine Arts, gathered under the guidance of curator Mari Carmen Ramirez. Kaufman says the HEAF will present both classical and very contemporary Latin American work. "It's a wonderful way to introduce a lot of artists who may not be as well-known here."

At both fairs, visitors will navigate a maze of wall space, browsing the participating galleries' holdings, as well as supplementary exhibits of not-for-sale works by nonprofit institutions. HEAF's gallery roster includes the elite London/New York/Berlin-based Haunch of Venison, New Orleans' edgy Jonathan Ferrara Gallery and San Francisco's global-oriented Frey Norris Contemporary and Modern. Pieces representing the current crop of international fellows in the Museum of Fine Arts' Glassell School Core Program will also be up for grabs, as will work from top local galleries like Moody, Sicardi, Hiram Butler, Anya Tish and **Colton & Farb**. In addition, there's also an offsite, CONTINUED...

STATE OF THE ART
From left: "Well" by Chul-Hyun Ahn, Hugo Lugo's "Educacion Feliz" and "Portrait" by Louis Gonzalez-Palma are among the works on display at the Houston Fine Art Fair this month.



ALL'S FAIR From left: "Wilmer and Francisco" by John Sonsini of ACME gallery in L.A., Chester Arnold's "Collection" from San Francisco's Catherine Clark Gallery, and Jill Moser's "Dawn" courtesy of Lennon, Weinberg, Inc. in New York hit the Texas Contemporary fair next month.

...CONTINUED RSVP-only VIP program—private tours of collectors' homes and corporate collections, as well as a tour of the MFA's current Helmut Newton nudes show led by photography curator Anne Wilkes Tucker. "There's no bad booth," says gallerist **Deborah Colton** of HFAF. "I'm very impressed with the layout. [Kaufman] has a curatorial background, and she's really making sure it's going to be a fine fair."

Meanwhile, the **Texas Contemporary** fair bows next month. Focusing strictly on contemporary art, it promises a totally different atmosphere from the HFAF.

New York-based Max Fishko and Jeffrey Wainhouse are the fair organizers under their artMRKT umbrella business, which also presents fairs in San Francisco and the Hamptons. Fishko is the former director of this month's Houston Fine Art Fair. He left the position over creative differences and formed the Texas Contemporary, but the decision to hold the fair a month later wasn't a competitive move; it was simply good sense.

"A good month," says Fishko, "it's comfortable weather, and it's appropriate in terms of other events that are going on, football season, other arts events." Wainhouse adds, "It's a better time for the dealers. There are positives and negatives to doing something a month after a different show, but there's a pretty remarkable difference between the two. Our show is going to have a different feel, a different vibe. You're going to see different art."

Echoing Kaufman in touting Houston's appeal as art market, Fishko and Wainhouse further describe what they see as unique about their event. "The work that you're going to find [at Texas Contemporary] is

going to be pretty vocal," insists Fishko. "This is about finding art that has something to say, that has a point of view. ... This is about getting involved in a conversation that's important. Deciding you want to own one of these objects is your way of participating in this conversation."

The fair's opening-night party Oct. 20 benefits the Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum, and Fishko gushes when he talks about receiving advice and encouragement from CAM Director Bill Arning. And Arning returns the love, noting, "Art fairs are not always the best places to see art, but I got a sense that [Fishko] was going to do something that was going to be very exciting."

Fishko and Wainhouse are still finalizing the list of participating galleries, but already they've managed to attract heavy hitters like NYC's Gering & Lopez Gallery, which represents provocative artists like *Penthouse* illustrator Hajime Sorayama and controversial figurine and doll photographer David Laundy. San Francisco's Baer Ridgway Gallery will attend; it represents Nao Bustamante, a performance artist and one of the colorful contestants on the first season of Bravo's *Work of Art*.

Local galleries involved include Texas Gallery and Inman Gallery, as well as a handful of nonprofit institutions, like UH's Blaffer Museum and the Rice Gallery, will present installations intended to enhance the look of the convention center.

"I think Houston is really excited that there are shows coming," Wainhouse assesses. "I think a lot of people don't know the difference between the two shows yet, but they will because they're probably going to go to both. It's our job now to make sure we deliver on our promises." ■

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STYLE | FASHION | SOCIAL

HOUSTON
NOVEMBER 2011

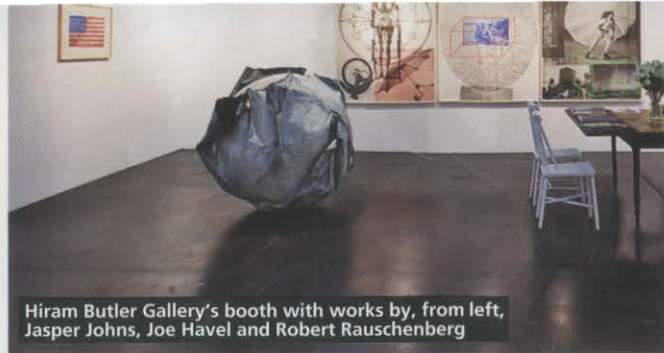
FAIR GAME

MOVE OVER,
ART BASEL
MIAMI BEACH.

CATHERINE D. ANSPON COVERS
HOUSTON'S FIRST EVER INTERNATIONAL
ART FAIR. PHOTOGRAPHY JENNY ANTILL.

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Hiram Butler Gallery's booth with works by, from left, Jasper Johns, Joe Havel and Robert Rauschenberg



Booth buzz



Ultra Violet, Carolyn Farb

Randy Powers

HOUSTON FINE ART FAIR LIFTS OFF

A Jasper Johns work on paper — a classic image of the American flag that was hung on its own wall in **Hiram Butler Gallery's** booth, its star wattage in inverse proportion to its modest size — was one of the highlights of the inaugural Houston Fine Art Fair, which unfurled at the George R. Brown Convention Center to great fanfare. The event brought 80 international exhibitors to town, including a coterie of our burg's power players, to be joined by astute collectors from Houston, Dallas and both coasts; a phalanx of artists, museum and nonprofit curators and directors; and the merely curious and the influential. In all, the three-day convergence beckoned a cast of thousands. Opening night alone enticed 3,000 to peruse and acquire treasures, from an early canvas of a New York subway scene by Mark Rothko at **Meredith Long & Company** to a multi-tun stacked sculpture by **William Cannings** at the fair entranceway near his dealer **Anya Tish's** booth, which sold twice for five hefty figures — one edition going to a Houston collector, another heading to a home in California. At the end of the day, how wonderful and *novel* to be able to leave George R. Brown and head home, instead of hailing a cab at Manhattan's Armory Show or patrolling the unfamiliar streets of, say, the Miami Design District. Best of all, this fair signifies that Houston is all grown up — and as we resolutely saw this September, our dealers, artists, curators and collectors can hold their own with anyone, any day, *anywhere*.



Sharon Lederer
Ellis Mills



Julie McGarr
Heather Houston



Donald Sultan
Rick Friedman



Meredith & Cornelia Long



Elisabeth McCabe



Joseph Cohen



Nick & Kelly Silvers



Emmelie Kopp



Sandy
Parkerson

Fran Kaufman



Libbie Masterson, Mark & Leslie Hull



Hiram Butler, Bill Goldston
Andrew Spindler



Adela Andea



Bill Caudell



Ann Berchtold



H.J. & Margaret Bott



Anya Tish



Roy & Mary Cullen



Melvyn &
Cyvia Wolff



Marita
Fairbanks

OPENING-NIGHT GRANDEES:

Mary and Roy Cullen
Martha Long
Meredith and Cornelia Long
Liz and David Anders
Ultra Violet
Rick Friedman
Fran Kaufman
Melanie Lawron and John Guess Jr.
Donald Sultan
Sissy and Denny Hempner
Joseph Cohen
Barbara and Tom Solis
Alison de Lima Greene
Betsy and Dick Silvers

FAIR PLAY AT TOOTSIES

AN AVANT-GARDE KICKOFF FÊTE IGNITES THE HOUSTON FINE ART FAIR. PLASTIC SKELETONS IN THE SHOE DEPARTMENT, ANYONE?

CATHERINE D. ANSPON SURVEYS THE ART BASH OF THE SEASON. PHOTOGRAPHY JENNY ANTILL.

ART-A-PALOOZA

Giant inflatables emblazoned with images, a towering wall of donuts, a floor flooded with blue foil-wrapped candies, one toy jeep driven by a creepy clown doll, miniature plastic skeletons cavorting amid the stilettos and a pair of artists at the entranceway, ardently painting away, were just a few examples of the wildly inventive mise en scène that took Tootsies and *PaperCity's* kickoff party for our town's first-ever international art fair way, waaaaaay, over the top. At the helm, Tootsies' main man, ring master **Mickey Rosmarin** (who's also known as a savvy art collector), presided over this exuberant evening that can only be described as an outrageous, art-smart extravaganza. The hip and happening bash fittingly launched the Houston Fine Art Fair, with its top squad of 80 global gallerists, that descended days later upon the George R. Brown Convention Center (for our Fair reportage, turn to page 10). Now back to our party: **Curating the wondrous storewide interventions was provocateur Paul Horn**, in collaboration with **Carolyn Farb** of Deborah Colton Gallery (among the Fair exhibitors). Carrying out the food installations were display impresarios/party planners **Steven Wagner** and **Paul Hensley**, who created odes to everyone from Jennifer Rubell to the late Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and chef **David Cordúa** of Americas, who devised the fête's artful fare.





Matt Messinger



Jessica Phifer, Lee Steffy



David Graeve's inflatables



Poppi Massey, JoAnn Park



Susan Plum
Catherine Ansporn



Paula Nolan, Eugene Foney



Aaron Parazette & Sharon Engelstein



Tatiana Massey



Kelie Mayfield
Travis Shirley



Jo Furr, Carolyn Farb



Deborah Colton
Shushana Castle



Craig Massey



Reggie & Leigh Smith



Justin
Dunford



Alexandra
Weems



Paul Horn



Barbara Davis



Dandee Danao's
Betty, 2008



Angelbert
Metoyer



Letty Loya



Delise Ward



Marilyn Oshman, Suzy Simons

Horn's wild ride through the art kingdom got some assist from fellow talents **Bert Long Jr.**, holding court and signing a limited-edition multiple of his Looscan Library mural; pop-cartoon maestro **Dandee Danao**, whose canvases cozied up to the designer-clad mannequins; **David Graeve**, drawing applause for his dramatic, oversized balloon installation; and, in the entrance window, **Matt Messinger** and **Justin Dunford**, wielding brush and pigment. In the throng of the cool and connected: Fair founder **Rick Friedman** dishing with director **Fran Kaufman**; committed collectors **Judy Nyquist**, **Leigh** and **Reggie Smith**, **Poppi Massey**, **Rowena Young** and **Buddy Steves**, **Lisa** and **Russell Sherrill**, **Eugene Foney**, and **Patti Bruni**; guests **Lynn Wyatt**, **Jo** and **Jim Furr**, **Frann Lichenstein**, **Eloise Frischkorn**, and **Kay Kobesky**; Houston Arts Alliance's **Jonathon Glus** and **Alton LaDay**; Looking at Art's **Marshal Lightman**, who was tapped by the late MFAH director Peter Marzio to serve as a Fair liaison; art advisor **Melissa Kepke Grobmyer**; architects **Erick Ragni** and **Kelie Mayfield**; a flock of exhibiting Houston gallerists including **Deborah Colton**, **Barbara Davis**, **Anya Tish**, and **Erin Siudzinski** of McClain Gallery; plus *Texas Artists Today* headliners including **H.J. Bott**, **Susie Rosmarin**, **Susan Plum**, **Angelbert Metoyer**, **Aaron Parazette** and **Sharon Engelstein**, who turned out for a big book signing with this scribe, collage designer **Tatiana Massey** and husband/project director **Craig Massey**, and their adorable daughter **Daria** who also penned her sig on a few volumes.

If you could commission any artist, past or present, to paint your portrait, who would it be? And what would the work be titled?

Patti Bruni: Terry Richardson, titled *For Real*.

Barbara Davis: Chuck Close, simply *Barbara*.

Marshal Grobmyer: Kehinde Wiley, if I could get him to paint a straight white girl. Something After *Rossetti*. Or maybe Marilyn Minter, entitled *Lipstick*.

Bert Long Jr.: The artist would be Piero Della Francesca. The title would be *Bert After The Duke of Urbino*.

Poppi Massey: Julian Schnabel. Just *Portrait of Poppi*.

JoAnn Park: Will Cotton. The canvas would be named *Cotton Candy JoJo*.

Erin Siudzinski: I would have to say Elizabeth Peyton. Her titles are pretty straightforward, like *Erin*.