

Art + Auction February, 2011

Datebook: A Tighter Weave

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The Armory Show, the behemoth contemporary-art event that began life in 1994 as the scrappy Gramercy Hotel Fair, is in its 11th edition, running from March 3 through 6 on Piers 92 and 94 on Manhattan's West Side with almost 300 exhibitors. Once again, a pier has been allocated to modern-art dealers, and the practice, inaugurated in 2010, of devoting a section to a particular city or region continues this year with a focus on Latin America. Among the 20 galleries invited to participate are Sao Paulo's Casa Triangulo and Rio de Janeiro's A Gentil Carioca. In keeping with the Latin American theme, New York's Sean Kelly has a new sculpture by the Cuban collective Los Carpinteros, while Paul Kasmin, also of New York, is putting together a display of new and recent neon-light installations by the Chilean sculptor Ivan Navarro.

As usual there is a strong contingent of exhibitors from London. In the center of its booth, Seventeen is installing Susan Collis's large wall inlaid with gemstones made to look like scratch marks. Victoria Miro features a large flower sculpture by Yayoi Kusama, and Modern Art is mounting a solo show of new paintings by the South African-born Ansel Krut. And just because New York galleries have their bases nearby doesn't mean they don't pull out the stops for the fair. Lehmann Maupin is turning its space over to new works by Gilbert & George, and 303 Gallery is bringing an impressive large photograph by Rodney Graham. In the modern section, New York's Knoedler & Company has recent paintings by John Walker.

Last year some visitors complained of tiny booths packed onto the piers. The organizers have responded. Although the Armory has seen "a swell in applications," according to Paul Morris, vice president of Merchandise Mart, which owns the fair, it has cut the number of booths from 298 to 268, to accommodate requests for more space.

Dealers Peter Kilchmann, of Zurich, and Nachst St. Stephen, of Vienna, which have sat out several times, are in this year, but the fair has lost two powerhouses: David Zwirner and the Pace Gallery, both of which are participating in the Art Dealers Association of America Art Show. Morris seems unfazed. Sies & Hoke, he notes, is happily taking Zwirner's front-and-center spot.