

What Sold at Frieze London 2014?

Coline Milliard, Friday, October 17, 2014



Frieze London 2014

Photo: Linda Nylind, courtesy Linda Nylind/Frieze

Everyone at Frieze London breathed a collective sigh of relief on opening day. For its 12th edition, the fair has finally gotten rid of its perennially slanted floors and harsh lighting, swapping them for a more standard, flat grey carpet and tasteful spotlights (courtesy of Universal Design Studio). The long tent, usually pitched on a North-South axis in Regent's Park, has also rotated 90 degrees. Instead of an endless corridor, the fair is now split into four easily identifiable zones, much more agreeable to navigate. As one gallerist pointed out to artnet News, these architectural tweaks weren't exactly "rocket science," but they radically transform the mood in the aisles. Collectors and dealers all seem much more relaxed this year. "The clientele is happier walking around," noted the Lisson Gallery's Ossian Ward. "They don't feel like they are being herded any more."

And this, of course, can mean one only thing: better business. Within the first few minutes of the opening, White Cube sold Damien Hirst's fish-in-formaldehyde diptych *Because I Can't Have You I Want You* (1993) for a staggering £4 million—it really goes to show that the excitement of art fair buying is hard to match. According to the [artnet Price Database](#), a one-cabinet piece from the same year, *Where Will it End?*, only fetched £962,500 at Christie's London last February. On the same day, White Cube also placed an installation of microphones by David Hammons, *Which Mike Would You Like to Be Like?* (2001), which came with a \$4 million price tag. At time of writing, these two pieces were considered the most expensive artworks sold at Frieze London 2014.



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Photo: Linda Nylind, courtesy Linda Nylind/Frieze

But White Cube's founder Jay Jopling isn't the only one with reason to rejoice. On the first day of the fair, collector David Roberts was in shopping mood, acquiring pieces by Danh Võ from Marian Goodman as well as works by Kim Fisher and Adam McEwen at Glasgow's Modern Institute for his North London foundation. Galerie Perrotin's solo presentation of works by the New York favorite [KAWS](#) sold out almost immediately (price range: \$120,000–310,000).

Most of the dealers [artnet News](#) spoke to reported brisker sales than last year. By the second day, many had already rehanging their booths. [Sigmar Polke](#), whose Tate Modern retrospective opened on Monday to rave reviews, was a hit at Michael Werner Gallery; one of his untitled gouache on paper works from 2003 went in the blink of an eye for \$800,000. The veteran German dealer also reported sales of three Enrico David works in the \$40,000–80,000 range, including a tapestry, which is quickly becoming *the* medium to watch. (Stephen Friedman also did particularly well with tapestries, in his case, Andreas Eriksson's blown-up details of abstract paintings). At Sprüth Magers, Andreas Gursky's *Kirchentag* (2013), the nighttime depiction of a German festival camp, found a new home for €400,000, as did pieces by [George Condo](#) (*Portrait with Green Shapes*, 2014), Sterling Ruby (*SPCE (4430)*, 2013), and Louise Lawler (*Hotel Room, Köln*, 1989/2014) for \$500,000, \$85,000, and \$60,000, respectively.

The new layout seems to have spurred dealers to be more imaginative with their presentations. Hauser & Wirth was the talk of the fair with its Mark Wallinger–curated booth, hung from floor to ceiling with selected nuggets from the gallery's inventory, in an arrangement loosely redolent

of Sigmund Freud's legendary study. Not only did the move allow Hauser & Wirth to fish out pieces that might have been languishing in storage, but it also encouraged buyers to explore beyond the confines of their comfort zone.

Talking to artnet News, Hauser & Wirth director Neil Wenman remarked that this year collectors appear less eager to seek out the artists they might have heard about and are buying "with their eyes rather than with their ears." This has already led to solid sales among some of the less obvious names of the gallery's stable, including Anna Maria Maiolino's sculpture *São 40 (They are 40)* (2011) for \$120,000 and Ida Applebroog's haunting picture *Jessika* (2007) for \$35,000. Perhaps less surprisingly, works by the likes of Paul McCarthy, Allan Kaprow, and Eva Hesse also did pretty well, selling around the half-million dollar mark.



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It could be that Frieze is returning to its more adventurous early days when the fair had to position itself as the edgy new kid on a block until then almost unilaterally ruled by Art Basel. Presented by the über-cool Frutta gallery in Rome, Gabriele de Santis' smiley installation located in the fair's sculpture park, *Can't Take My Eyes off You* (2014), was snapped up by an enthusiastic Abu Dhabi collector even younger than the artist himself.

Speaking to artnet News, Lisson Gallery's Ward didn't hesitate to call the fair a "site for experimentation." "It's our local fair, and it's our opportunity to shine," he said. While the gallery's best-sellers—[Daniel Buren](#), [Anish Kapoor](#), and Lee Ufan—have been sent off to Frieze Masters, the new generation has been given free rein at Frieze London. Staff sporting Ryan Gander's faux-muddied Adidas trainers and Cory Arcangel's "surfware" line ("everything you need to chill in bed all day and surf the net") paced Arcangel's vivid gradient rug, surrounded by the pop creations of Joyce Pensato. Arcangel even invited the gallery's employees to perform—they don his surfware and watch *Anchorman 2*—thus (theoretically at least) withdrawing from the booth's commercial activities. It didn't *really* impede business: buyers, no doubt titillated by all this experimentation, went for the more traditional, wall-based works. Nothing too surprising there.



Frieze London 2014: Focus section
Photo: Linda Nylind, courtesy Linda Nylind/Frieze

Lehmann Maupin has opted for a female-artist-only booth. Tracey Emin, still reeling from the success her iconic piece *My Bed* (1998) found at auction (see "[Christie's Rides Tracey Emin's Bed to £99 Million Night](#)") is ever-more popular with collectors, who appear to relate to her increasingly serene persona (and ever-increasing market value). Embroideries and gouaches flew off the booth in the fair's first few hours, as did Mickalene Thomas's rhinestone and acrylic on panel *FBI/Serial Portraits* (2008). The gallery also boasted strong sales from pieces by Adriana Varejão, Teresita Fernández, and Xiang Jing.

Rachel Lehmann told artnet News she had met collectors from Hong Kong, China, and Lebanon, and marveled at London's internationalism, which, in her view, greatly surpasses that of the US. Marianne Boesky Gallery's director Serra Pradhan chimed in as well. "London is a real global center," she said. "It's easy for Europeans, it's easy for Middle Easterners, for Asians. New York tends to be more of a global center for finance." Like virtually everyone this year, Pradhan is certainly happy she made the trip. The dealer confided that her booth, which features works by Diana Al-Hadid, Pier Paolo Calzolari, and Svenja Deininger, had completely sold out. Only two more days to go.