

Kayne Griffin Corcoran

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Art LA Contemporary Opens With Big Crowds and Edgy Vibe The preview privileged the radical and the new.



Puppies Puppies, *Red Carpet* Courtesy the artist and Queer Thoughts, New York

Crowds descended on Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica airport yesterday afternoon for the VIP preview of Art Los Angeles Contemporary, the fast-rising regional fair that reflects LA's vibrant and expanding contemporary art scene.

Although the fair is understandably heavy on top West Coast names—Marc Selwyn, Suzanne Vielmetter, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, David Kordansky, Night Gallery, Francois Ghebaly, and M+B Gallery, to name just a few—this year saw the addition of 10 Chancery Lane from Hong Kong, Vermelho from Sao Paulo, and the return of an exciting roster of New York exhibitors (The Hole, Jack Hanley) and European names (Peres Projects from Berlin and Clint Roenisch of Toronto).



The Hole, performance by Jaimie Warren. Photo courtesy of Maxwell Williams.

Spotted among the crowd of VIPs in attendance were collectors Kenny Goss, Susan and Michael Hort, Stefan Simchowicz, Anita Zabłudowicz (the latter, we were told, jetted into Santa Monica airport directly from Nevada where she's at work on an art project), Stavros Merjos, Lauren Taschen, Kyle DeWoody, and other major art fair directors Tony Karman of EXPO Chicago and Benjamin Genocchio of the Armory Show.

Also in attendance were Scott Hoffman (aka Babydaddy from the band Scissor Sisters), actress Rhea Pearlman, Marciano Art Collection's Jamie Manne, the Hammer Museum's Ali Subotnik, and Bettina Korek, founder of For Your Art.

Artist Puppies Puppies created quite a stir at the entrance to the hangar with a performance titled *Red Carpet*, which involved the artist, completely covered head-to-toe in skin-tight red satin and lying on a red carpet, to such a degree of stillness that it was hard to tell if the figure was a live person or just a mannequin.

Curious fairgoers stopped to gawk and take pictures. A few hours later, on the way out, the red-clad figure was still on the carpet (though we're told he took some breaks), now in the dark, and eager photo snappers were posing in all forms of Instagram-friendly selfies and shots.

"This still feels like a young fair," said founder and director Tim Fleming, who launched the fair in 2010. Fleming stopped to chat with artnet News as he was making the rounds with artists, dealers, and VIP collectors. "It has now progressed into a real destination fair. I'm really thrilled at the scale of LA galleries and new participants from Asia and Brazil. We've spent eight years working with LA to show the city what an art fair can be."

Mainstay LA galleries Honor Fraser and Steve Turner used the fair as a platform to present solo shows by artists who have not yet had one in their respective galleries.

Kinsella, Eileen. "Art LA Contemporary Opens With Big Crowds and Edgy Vibe." Artnet. 28 January 2017. Web.



Thomas Linder, Slat Louver with Three Interruptions (2016). Courtesy of Ibid Gallery.

At Honor Fraser was the work of Victoria Fu, an artist born and raised in Los Angeles, who, according to gallery director Corrina Peipon, uses light, photography, sculpture, and video to explore “the virtual space of moving images and our engagement with analogue and digital technology.”

After returning to ALAC for the first time in several years, gallerist Steve Turner said he had decided to give artist Ann Hirsch a solo show here after a recent studio visit. The presentation “Genies and Annies” consists of four large scale (nine-foot-tall) paintings on velvet that imagine the artist and her husband’s future children as adults. “I just thought these are so good, they should be shown,” said Turner. “Brave, tough work like this should be shown at an art fair.”

San Francisco gallerist Jessica Silverman, who showed works by Dashiell Manley and Judy Chicago among others, told artnet News it was the first time back to ALAC in a while, and noted that with all the activity going on in LA on the institutional front, as well as Chicago’s “important relationship” to the city, it felt like “there is something to say, and it’s the right time to reinsert ourselves.”

David Kordansky organized a solo presentation of works on paper by Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen) that felt extremely timely with the LGBTQ movements back in battle with political forces.



Tom of Finland, Untitled (preparatory drawing) (1977). Courtesy of David Kordansky.

Kordansky explained to artnet News that the works were “radical” for their time. Given that his images were some of the first to portray self-empowered masculine figures performing sexual acts with one another, they were responsible for helping to change the ways that gays and other marginalized groups found their strength and political agency.

Kayne Griffin Corcoran organized a solo artist booth of works by artist and filmmaker David Lynch that consisted of intriguing, often dark works on paper with whimsical texts, alongside sculptural installations. Director Genevieve Day said this is the second year exhibiting at ALAC. “It felt like a nice way to show a slice of David’s work,” she said. “We also wanted to make people who may not know [aware] that he’s been a fine artist for years.”

Another solo booth was that of Suzanne Vielmetter Projects, of Culver City. The gallery dedicated the booth to artist Dan Levenson, who, as director Kevin Scholl stated, created “a fictional Swiss art school,” including aprons, desks, and works signed by “artists” whose names appear signed on some of the works, though they are not real and are actually a result of random mash-ups taken from a Zurich telephone book. Works, which can be bought individually, were priced from \$1,500 to \$15,000.



Imi Knoebel, Tafel 800 DCCC (2016). Courtesy of Galerie Christian Lethert.

"We always love to support an LA fair," Scholl said. "It allows us to be experimental, in this case devoting an entire floor to a single artist."

Los Angeles-based Night Gallery presented a captivating selection of work by artists including Grant Levy-Lucero, Han Bing, Marisa Takal, Claire Tabouret, and Sean Townley. Owner Davida Nemeroff called the show "a hometown fair" adding, "we are showcasing a selection of artists we work with."

Another LA favorite was Luis De Jesus, Los Angeles, which mounted a three-artist show, including mesmerizing works by Lia Halloran, Masood Kamandy, and Britton Tolliver. Prices for works in the booth ranged from \$3,000 to the high teens.

Laguna Beach dealer Peter Blake showed several large-scale works by late artist John H. Miller that utterly dominated the space and the viewers' eyes. "We couldn't think of a better way to pay tribute to the artist than with a solo booth here," said Blake. He explained that Miller, whose works were frequently regarded as reductive, was opposed to being classified as an Op Art artist. The artist strongly disliked labels and instead meant to impart a meditative and serene feeling with his elaborate works.