

Kayne Griffin Corcoran



What Sold at The Armory Show



Mary Corse, Untitled (Blue Double Arch), 1998, Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Despite coinciding with the London auctions, TEFAF Maastricht, and a snow storm, the 24th edition of The Armory Show still proved a success for many dealers, highlighting the continued importance of American collectors in the art market.

“The timing is not ideal for The Armory,” said European dealer Thaddaeus Ropac, who has five spaces across Paris, London, and Salzburg. “Having said this, America is still the biggest art market in contemporary art—it’s really dominant there...We shouldn’t underestimate that Americans can have a fair, and almost ignore the rest of the world.”

Despite the increasingly global nature of the art market, The Armory Show’s inadvertent overlap with other key art events in other countries did give credence to its solidly domestic focus where buyers are concerned. Dealers repeatedly referred to the fair’s focus on being a hub for collectors from all over the United States; more so than, say Art Basel in Miami Beach, which draws in collectors from Latin America, or Frieze New York, with its British roots and more international feel. Ropac said he and his colleagues noted museum groups and important collectors in attendance from places such as San Diego, Maine, North Carolina, Texas, and across the Midwest.

Ropac himself had to miss the first two days of The Armory Show because he remained in London for the auctions, where he said a number of Asian collectors were also present. He arrived by Friday and could be seen warmly

Sussaman, Anna Louie. "What Sold at The Armory Show." Artsy. 11 March 2018. Web.

greeting collectors for most of the afternoon. His staff had made notable sales in his absence on the fair's first two days and business continued through Friday, including a large \$650,000 Robert Longo charcoal drawing fresh from the studio, which sold to a Stuttgart museum, a heavily textured Jason Martin painting, multiple works by Gilbert & George, and a large painting by Alex Katz. With the exception of the Longo sale, all the other works went to U.S.-based collectors, said executive director Arne Ehmann.

Unlike last year, when the pall of U.S. President Donald Trump's inauguration hung over The Armory Show and its largely left-leaning participants, this year "people seemed to have made their peace" with the political situation and were back to being focused on art, said Sean Kelly, whose booth near the fair's entry was doing typically brisk business. Plus, many in the art-collecting tax bracket will benefit from a recent tax code overhaul (residents of New York and other high-tax cities and states will likely suffer due to the limit on deductions for state and local taxes).

Two sets of Mary Corse's works on paper sold from Los Angeles gallery Kayne Griffin Corcoran's stand to American collectors for \$110,000 each. A gallery spokesperson said the three large-scale paintings on view were only available for purchase by institutions.

—Anna Louie Sussman