



A FAIR TO REMEMBER

Dallas Art District gets a new tenant for February



The brainchild of John Sughrue, who was instrumental in launching the Fashion Industry Gallery and the Magnolia Theatre among other cultural accomplishments, the inaugural *Dallas Art Fair* kicks off on February 6 for three days of events featuring a vast collection of fine art from significant contemporary artists. Over thirty galleries from twelve U.S. cities will participate in this national fair, and co-founder Chris Byrne is enthusiastic about the opportunity to bring a high-end showing to Dallas.

"The *Dallas Art Fair* was created specifically with our local audience in mind," he says. "Many of the invited exhibitors have longtime relationships with individuals and institutions in the area. Dallas has great patrons who have formed important collections and given tremendously to local institutions," he says. "By cultivating young collectors, we hope that the *Dallas Art Fair* will encourage this level of involvement."

Almost every genre of twentieth-century art will be represented across media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, video, and installation, according to Byrne. And the list of artists reads like a Who's Who list of the best in their media: David Bates, James Castle, John Chamberlain, Chuck Close, Henry Darger, Damien Hirst, Sol Lewitt, Joan Mitchell, and Cy Twombly, just to name-drop a few.

"There are many noteworthy galleries, so we began by inviting those who are working with collectors, dealers,

STEVEN LINDSEY

While some noteworthy art fairs are going dark to escape the economic downturn, Dallas is hosting an ambitious new art fair next month in hopes of bridging us with the larger arts world. For years, serious North Texas art collectors had to travel the globe to seek out the world's greatest art pieces to adorn their homes and gardens. And while there's something inherently exhilarating about building your collection in tandem with travel experiences, you can put away your award miles because this year the galleries are coming right to our front door.

and institutions here [in Dallas]," Byrne says. "We felt that their participation would be the most meaningful."

Local gallery owners are welcoming the out-of-town dealers, too.

"I think it's a great way to attract attention to this area!" says William Campbell, president of William Campbell Contemporary Art, Inc. in Fort Worth. "Having high-profile galleries from other regions will attract a broad section of art interests to the fair."

And for the out-of-town galleries involved, Dallas represents a new chance to reach another audience in a different way.

"There are so many art fairs, too many I think, but this feels like a special opportunity," says Jill Weinberg Adams, owner of Lennon, Weinberg, Inc. in New York City. "The organizers of the *Dallas Art Fair* have attracted a select group of exhibitors to a different model for a fair. Not big, but well-selected, tailored to appeal to a range of visitors drawn largely from the region. Half of the participants are members of the Art Dealers Association of America whose established *Art Show* in New York later in February seems to have served as a model for the *Dallas Art Fair*. Large enough to be lively and attract a good audience, small enough to encourage dialogue and relationship building."

Adams adds that Dallas has what could be seen as a unique characteristic when it comes to buying art, tapping into a wealth of arts patronage through the years.

"The people of Dallas have a reputation for risk-taking and individualism, entrepreneurial attitudes, and open minds. There is a history of strong-minded collectors with support for the arts. For example, I began my life in the art world in the '70s and '80s working with Xavier Fourcade Gallery here in New York," she says. "Ray and Patsy Nasher were far more than just clients of the gallery, they were people Xavier could trade ideas with, involve



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above: John Sughrue and Chris Byrne, co-founders of the Dallas Art Fair.

left: John Chamberlain, *EROTICATTACCA-BANTER*, 2007

in the first stages of projects such as the monumental late sculptures of Willem de Kooning, and enjoy a meal with at the end of the day. In addition to that special breed of collector, though, are the folks who enliven their homes with artworks they choose, enjoy, and cherish. And I suspect there are many such collectors in Dallas.”

Owner Andrew Edlin of the Andrew Edlin Gallery in New York has his own reasons for traveling to Dallas. “I’m always interested in building a new audience. Also, gotta be warmer than NYC in February!” he jokes.

While designed to provide an exceptional resource for experienced collectors, the *Dallas Art Fair* also presents a rare opportunity for burgeoning art lovers to start building their collections, according to Byrne. “There will be relatively inexpensive pieces on view alongside important historical works by recognized masters,” he says of the diverse showing. “I think it’s important to recognize that each of our interests develop. We don’t suddenly wake up one morning and become artists, curators, or collectors. So for those who are just now discovering visual art, the fair will be a chance to become acquainted with various approaches to art-making.”

So aside from seeing art, the fair will provide an opportunity to enhance the knowledge of experts and neophytes alike with symposia and tours organized by local art patrons Becky Bruder and Cindy Schwartz. The planned list of moderators for the panel discussions will include the former Whitney Collection curator Klaus Kertess, art patron and collector Marguerite Hoffman, organizer of the Texas Biennial Michael Duncan, three-term president of the Art Dealers Association of America Dick Solomon, and Dr. Charissa N. Terranova of the University of Texas at Dallas School of Arts and Humanities. Local artists are also being tapped to lead docent tours and answer questions about art.

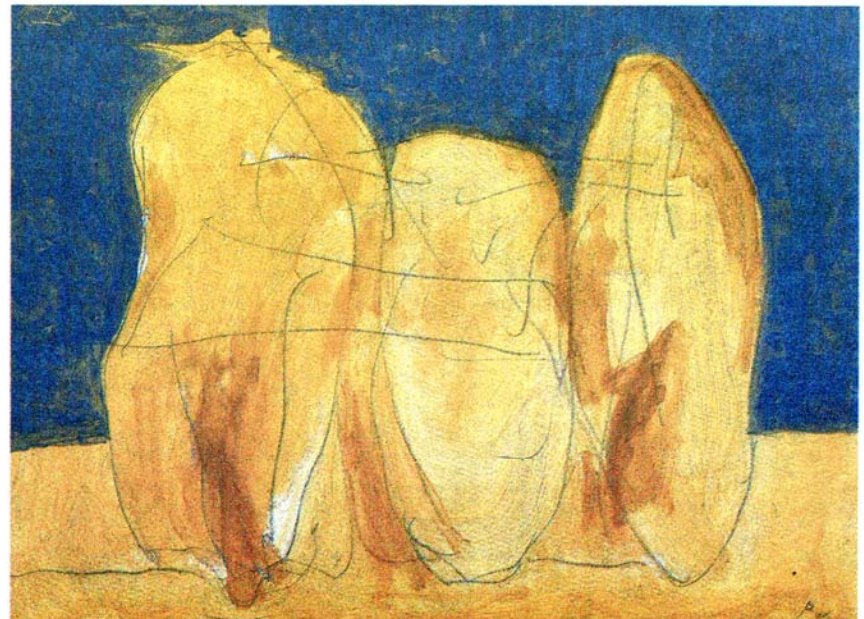
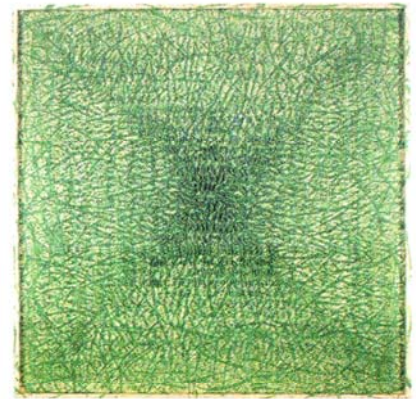
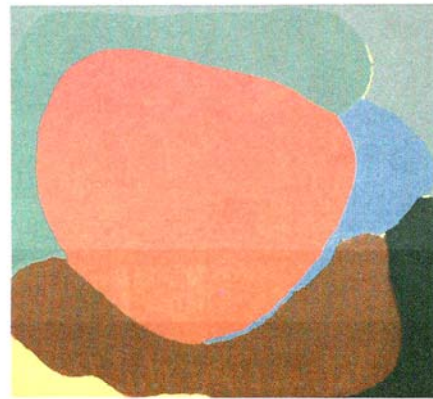
The timing for the launch of the *Dallas Art Fair* coincides with an invigorating rebirth of the entire cultural scene in the city.

“It’s an exciting time because Dallas has talented artists, writers, dealers, curators, and collectors,” Byrne says. “I look forward to the completion of the Arts District as a central location for the arts.”

The resurgence and continued expansion of the Arts District also signal a shift in attitude and open-armed reception by the citizens of Dallas for more arts-based options. “It would have been hard to even imagine a national art fair being possible ten years ago. The downtown arts district has focused attention on the city, allowing us to host prominent national galleries.”

The organizers are keeping the overall scope of the fair in perspective this first year but are eyeing the growth potential in subsequent years. “In the first year, we’re intentionally keeping the scale of the fair very manageable,” Byrne says. “We hope that this event grows with the audience and in this way, it will continue to share the specific interests of our local patrons.”

For additional information on the Dallas Art Fair, including times and tickets, visit www.dallasartfair.com.



clockwise from top: William Wegman, *Red Bench*, 2008. Courtesy of Texas Gallery. Martin Kline, *Secret Garden*, 2006. Courtesy of Jason McCoy, Inc. Robert Motherwell, *Hollow Men V*, 1986. Courtesy of William Shearburn Gallery. Lynn McCarty, *Early Winter Window*, 2007