

Papercity

M A G A Z I N E

April 14, 2016

A Gorgeous Royal With an L.A. Art Sense: Meet the Most Important New Exhibitor at the Dallas Art Fair

By: Catherine D. Ansporn



Fraser pre-gallery days had a cutting-edge, glam career in the London fashion world on runway and in print. (Courtesy FMD)

Raised in a Scottish castle, with a royal pedigree, the cousin of **Isabella Blow** and one of the faves of the late **Alexander McQueen**, **Honor Fraser** is not your typical art dealer. But perhaps that is the point. Over email, and as she was packing up her booth for the **Dallas Art Fair** — a solo presentation for **Sarah Cain**, whose hybrid practice melds sculpture, painting, installation and even a side of home furnishings and fashion — the Los Angeles-based power gallerist took us back to the beginning.

Thirteen Questions for Miss Fraser

Fashion and art's cross-pollination seems natural. While Murakami and Kusama each collaborated on famous projects for Louis Vuitton and designer Helmut Lang's become a sculptor, you may be the only model to infiltrate the art world. What was your inspiration for becoming a gallerist? The art.

First encounter with the contemporary art world. Various unintelligible encounters with YBA work while still in the UK, but then [James Rosenquist's] *F111* at MoMA on my first visit to America and NYC, in approximately 1991. Seeing this massive and largely political work with Rosenquist's sign-painter hand made an impact.

Also, growing up, which historical artists were you surrounded by? Did they hang in your home in Beaufort Castle? Paintings by lesser known artists of Venetian bridges, family portraits and animals. The house in Scotland had no central heating. There were heavy tapestries with narrative scenes that were supposed to protect us from the cold. I am not sure how effective it was.

Was there any special aspect of your upbringing that you credit towards your avocation as a gallerist? None, it seems. We were outdoors most of the time.

Trajectory to becoming a gallerist. I graduated from college and went to work for Larry Gagosian [in Los Angeles]. I opened a project space — Honor Fraser on Abbot Kinney in Venice — for a few years, and then moved to La Cienega/Culver City to establish a gallery with a program.

Breakthrough moment as an art dealer. Every time an artist agrees to work with us, in whatever capacity.

Date opened. 2008.

First exhibition. Norwegian artist Gardar Eide Einarsson.

Similarities the art world and fashion world share. Creative voices that battle against all the challenges to be heard.

On how art and fashion differ. Fashion by its very nature moves quickly. I like to think that the art world affords the artist more time, that though there are trends in the art market, that the core of the process of making art is not "seasonal" in quite the same way.

Challenges of running a gallery with your name on the door. Remembering to stop thinking about the gallery, sometimes.

Why, being a Brit, did you open your gallery in L.A. versus London? What is the state of the L.A. art scene that keeps you there? I had been living in the U.S. for a number of years already, having worked in NYC and studied at USC. I have long since been seduced by America and had no intention of moving back to England.

California has been at the forefront of social/cultural change, health, and technological innovation. Amazing place to have a gallery! It may also have some of the more beautiful and varied landscape in the world, and after 15 years, I am still exploring it.

First major artist that you exhibited. Each artist has represented something very important to the gallery as we begin working together or working towards a show.

Where you find new talent. I meet artists through other artists and curator recommendations.

Why you're exhibiting in the Dallas Art Fair 2016. I have been visiting Dallas and Fort Worth for many years now. The depth of commitment to the building of cultural institutions and support of art, architecture, music etc. is inspiring. **Chris Byrne** has created an important event in the cultural calendar with the fair, and he has the support of key local and national art patrons.

In your booth at the Fair. Solo booth of new works by L.A.-based abstract painter **Sarah Cain**. Sarah has strong ties to Texas. She has shown in Houston, has the support of various collectors, and her work is in many of the public collections in the state. I am delighted to be able to debut this strong new body of work here therefore.

We note a number of your artists have Texas ties and/or have exhibited here, such as Rosson Crow, Erik Parker, KAWS, Mario Ybarra Jr., and most recently Glenn Kaino, who's currently on view at The Modern in Fort Worth. What are your personal Texas connections? Yes, I have been visiting and working with many of the institutions in Texas over the last seven years. I have friends living in various cities across the state as a result. I work with two Texan artists, **Rosson Crow** and **Erik Parker**, both of whom I have traveled with in the state.

On a personal level, though, my inspirational cousin **Isabella Blow** would describe her years spent in Texas during her marriage to a wildcatter. She was always dressed in flamboyant outfits and brilliantly colored lipsticks. Her stories of the oil fields were always compelling. I imagined her riding in the Texan landscape with her pomegranate lips and Scottish tartan mini skirts. She described being welcomed warmly by everyone she met.

After the Dallas Art Fair wraps, what are you looking forward to in 2016 in terms of travels, exhibitions, films, books, adventures? What is on your radar? Upcoming trip to China to visit with several artists and museums. Amongst other things I plan to visit are Peking University campus, a Kung Fu show, Tiananmen Square and some of the futuristic architecture of Olympic Park, and the opera house shaped like an egg. I also plan to visit Xi'an for the first time to see the Terracotta Army, the ultimate installation.

I am glad to attend the Pulitzer Prize ceremony in NYC (early April) being awarded to Chilean architect **Alejandro Aravena**, whose work I am interested in. He is also the director of the Architecture Biennale in Venice this year.

I am reading **Elon Musk**, which is gripping, and trying to work out how to get a tour of **SpaceX**.

I have the new biography of **Peggy Guggenheim** next, and **David Seders**, too. In a nostalgic moment for the UK, I am listening to **Desert Island Discs** podcasts. I am looking forward to the **Black Mountain College** at the **Hammer Museum** and **Kenny Scharf** and **Ann Magnuson's** Club 57 show at **MoMA**.

I will spend time in Death Valley in April with my children. Teepees, and hot springs, and I hope to catch the end of the **Super Bloom**. Unfortunately, I might be too late.