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The World's Art In One City: In London for Frieze Week 2015



Meric Algün Ringborg, *Ninety Percent of Everything*, 2015. Courtesy of Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin. At Frieze London, Stand B11.

London is one of the most international cities on the planet. With one third of its population foreign born, over 300 languages spoken in its streets, and residents representing nearly every nation, religion, and ethnicity on Earth, London truly holds the world in one city. As a major hub of international finance and business, and one of the global art capitals of the world, London is also a premiere destination for collectors—particularly in October, when Frieze Art Fair stakes its claim in Regent's Park and the London auction houses stage their modern and contemporary sales. The depth and diversity of art on offer at the fairs, auctions, and in exhibition spaces throughout the city, form a portrait of an increasingly globalized world, and its microcosm is reflected in the city of London itself. In the run-up to the fair, MutualArt spoke with a number of curators and consultants about Frieze Week, and how it captures a glimpse of the geographic diversity of the art world.



Praneet Soi, *Srinagar II – Wood Work*, 2015. Courtesy of Experimentier, Kolkata. At Frieze London, Stand G29.

Collectors, curators, critics, and other art world professionals travel from far flung locations to London for Frieze Week—a convergence that forges camaraderie and new connections. Curator Björn Geldhof, for instance, is traveling to London all the way from Baku, Azerbaijan, where he was recently appointed the Artistic and Strategic Director of the non-profit contemporary art center YARAT. “Together with Art Basel, Frieze facilitates a place to meet with many colleagues, artists and collectors from around the world,” he says. The opportunity to meet with many people in one location is certainly a valuable one for the curator, who currently juggles his new position in Baku with one in Kiev, Ukraine, where he holds the role of deputy artistic director at the Pinchuk Art Centre until the end of the year. “That aside,” Geldhof continues, “there are, during Frieze Week, always really exciting exhibitions on throughout London, allowing someone like me to see many people and a lot of good exhibitions in a short time and with minimum of travel.”



Koichi Enomoto, *Ancient Violence*, 2015. © Koichi Enomoto. Courtesy of TARO NASU. At Frieze London, Stand B13.

London's many art spaces ensure that their finest exhibitions are on view for the influential and international audience of Frieze Week, from its prestigious museums and world-renowned

galleries, to its upstart artist-run ventures and non-profit exhibition spaces. Visitors to London in October can take in a huge variety of exhibitions and events across the city, featuring art from around the world, such as: the first UK exhibition of South African artist Kemang Wa Lehulere at Gasworks' newly renovated space, in South London; a sound sculpture by Chinese artist Zhang Ding at the ICA; a feature-length film by Berlin and Jerusalem-based artist Jumana Manna at Chisenhale Gallery, in Hackney; an exhibition of abstract art from Belgium, curated by Luc Tuymans, at the non-profit Parasol Unit, in East London; *Broken English*, an exhibition of contemporary African art, at Mayfair's new Tyburn Gallery; the hugely popular Ai Weiwei exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts; and many, many others.



Exhibition view, *Broken English*, Tyburn Gallery, London, 18 September – 28 October 2015. Courtesy Tyburn Gallery.

One hundred sixty galleries representing 27 countries are exhibiting at this year's Frieze London fair (October 14-17), offering work by artists from around the globe—and not just the usual art centers of New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, or Paris. Every continent is represented at Frieze London (except Antarctica of course), from first-time exhibitor Hopkinson Mossman from Auckland, New Zealand, to repeat Frieze exhibitor, Beirut-based Sfeir-Semler. Contemporary African art is represented at Frieze at Johannesburg's Goodman Gallery with artists from the continent like Kudzanai Chiurai, Misheck Masamvu and others, while satellite fair 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair (October 15-18) further expands the market for art from Europe's southern neighbor, and deepens the conversation with FORUM, its series of talks and discussions.



[Omar Victor Diop](#), *Ikhlas Khan*, *Diaspora series*, 2015. Courtesy of Magnin-A, Paris. At 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair.

Collectors' tastes for international perspectives go beyond contemporary art, too. This year Frieze Masters (October 14-18) exhibitors draw from diverse international movements that diverge from the canonical Western narrative. As Clara M. Kim, curator of the Spotlight section of Frieze Masters, stated in a press release earlier this year, "In our globalized world, the gap between the mainstream and the periphery should be ever more bridged – creating complex, nuanced readings of art making and contributing to an expansive view of art histories from all corners of the globe." Spotlight's solo presentations of 20th century work will include artists Hyunki Park (Gallery Hyundai, Seoul), Tomie Ohtake (Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo), Keiichi Tanaami (Nanzuka, Tokyo), and Jess (Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco), among others.



Hyunki Park, *Video Inclining Water*, 1979. Courtesy of Gallery Hyundai, Seoul. At Frieze Masters, Stand G14.

Indeed, it may be a great time to invest in the market for non-Western 20th century artwork. Arianne Levene Piper, a London-based art consultant who advises major collectors in Zurich, London, Stockholm and Dubai, spoke to us about the prevalence of Japanese Gutai and Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome works at Frieze Masters this year. “I think the growing international interest in these works is down to a number of factors which have affected the market,” she says. “The fragility of the economy alongside the boom of the contemporary art market, as well as the very volatile careers of some of the young artists whose prices have reached record highs in the space of a few years, alongside the severe correction in certain sectors such as the Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern art scenes, has led to collectors across the board becoming more discerning.” These collectors, she asserts, are resisting the tendency to look for the “next young artist,” instead looking to artists with longer careers “but whose works may have been overlooked.” She points to similar trends in Italian art, as well as with works by the Zero Group, adding “I also think the Cobra movement is worth reconsidering when visiting Frieze this year.”



Frank Auerbach, *Head of E.O.W.*, 1957. © Frank Auerbach. Courtesy of Marlborough Fine Art, London. At Frieze Masters, Stand C8.

The secondary market also demonstrates a measure of global diversity in the works on offer in London this year. This may reflect an increasingly international collector base; as Alexander Platon, Senior Director of Marlborough Fine Art and a fifteen-year veteran of Sotheby’s, remarks, “The art market has been on an impressive rise and so has the high end of the secondary market. Up to 10 years ago the majority of buyers were American. More recently, a much broader group of art collectors have emerged from Russia, Asia, South America and Europe, concentrating on the top end of the market. And indeed the market has never been as deep and strong.” At Christie’s Postwar and Contemporary Evening Auction on October 16, bidders can compete for work by British painter Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes, Japanese artists Yoshitomo Nara and Takashi Murakami, or for the auction’s leading lot by Scottish-born, Canada-raised, Trinidad-based artist Peter Doig. Sotheby’s Contemporary Art Evening Auction, on October 15, features works by Korean artist Lee Ufan, Los Angeles-based Alex Israel, and Soviet-born Ilya Kabakov, but the highest bids will likely go to its Italian Sale earlier that evening, centered around several exquisite works by Lucio Fontana. Also on October 15, Bonhams will

host its Africa Now auction of works of contemporary African art, including Ghanaian artist El Anatsui, Congolese artist **Chéri Samba**, and South African Deborah Margaret Bell.



Peter Doig, *Cabin Essence*, 1993-94. Estimate on request (above £9,000,000). Courtesy of Christie's.

It's remarkable to consider how quickly and seamlessly international art movements are identified, packaged, and collected now. Art movements that incubated for decades, out of reach from Western trajectories, are now being reassessed and reinvigorated, while contemporary artists operating out of the corners of the globe are attracting international attention. With global communication enabled as never before, in the digital age collectors, curators, and artists have unprecedented reach, but there's nothing like seeing the work in person. So, in October, it converges in London: the world's art in one city.



Chéri Samba, *J'aime la couleur*, 2003. Estimated £25,000 - 35,000 (US\$ 38,000 - 54,000). Courtesy of Bonhams.

—Natalie Hegert