



Bouquet 1 by Jennifer Steinkamp, 2013, from Lehmann Maupin, one of the blue-chip US galleries with an outpost in Hong Kong.

Rising in the East

THE EYES OF CHICAGO'S ART WORLD TURN TO ASIA AS ART BASEL HONG KONG LAUNCHES INTO ITS SECOND YEAR. BY SUE HOSTETLER

In just a few years, Hong Kong has evolved from a city that many considered a cultural desert to the fourth-largest global market for contemporary art. More than \$130 million in fine art was sold in the region in 2013, according to art market information source Artprice, partially due to record-setting auctions and the rise of billionaire art collectors in China. As recently as 2008, Hong Kong had no major art fairs, but the visionaries behind the influential Art Basel shows in Switzerland and Miami Beach helped push the cultural renaissance forward last year when they debuted Art Basel in Hong Kong.

Asia's second annual Art Basel fair—which opens May 15 and features 245 of the world's most influential galleries from 39 countries—will help add even more international exposure to the Asian art market. “Art Basel in Hong Kong aspires to provide a fair for Asia of global stature and the highest quality while retaining its unique regional flavor,” says show director Magnus Renfrew. “Hong Kong has long been regarded as the portal connecting the East and the West. It's a major financial hub, and as such is [positioned] to allow for efficient transactions [between galleries and collectors].”

This year's show will be marked by the strong programming that is a hallmark of the two other Art Basel shows. The Discoveries sector, dedicated to

solo and two-person exhibitions by emerging artists, is building particular buzz. Also creating excitement is the Encounters sector, featuring large-scale sculptural and installation pieces curated by Japan's highly regarded Yuko Hasegawa of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. “Last year Yuko's selection spurred a compelling discourse around contrasting generational and cultural approaches to artistic practices,” says Renfrew. “I have every confidence that her program this year will again present ambitious works that act as conversation points.” And one of Art Basel Miami Beach's most beloved events—the Film sector—will debut in Hong Kong this year, developed by Chinese multimedia artist and curator Li Zhenhua and hosted in partnership with the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

These collaborations with local institutions help Art Basel support the burgeoning contemporary art scene in Hong Kong. Not only is the government pouring billions of dollars into developing a cultural district in West Kowloon, but the new M+, a world-class museum slated for completion in 2017, further illustrates Hong Kong's commitment to the visual arts. Perhaps the most significant indicator is the number of respected Western galleries—including

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RIGHT: A scene from Art Basel Hong Kong in 2013. BELOW: Magnus Renfrew, the fair's director. BOTTOM: A piece from Peng Wei's embroidery series, at Hong Kong's Galerie Ora-Ora.



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Gagosian, White Cube, and Lehmann Maupin—that have opened Hong Kong outposts over the last few years. These dealers, along with influential homegrown stalwarts such as 10 Chancery Lane, Galerie Ora-Ora, and Pearl Lam, are instrumental in developing both artists and collections in the region.

According to Renfrew, these relationships with the local galleries and institutions (including Asia Art Archive, Para/Site, the Asia Society, and Spring Workshop) are essential to Art Basel in Hong Kong as they create a show “grounded in the city.” He explains, “The growth of Hong Kong’s museum sector and contemporary arts education will truly impact the larger discourse in the city, and that is something that we aim—through long-term partnerships—to cultivate.”

The fair’s impact is sure to be felt far beyond Asia. One need look no further than the talks planned as part of the Conversations and Salon program. A discussion titled “Global Art World/Making Biennials” will feature Juliana Engberg, artistic director of the 2014 Biennale of Sydney and artistic director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art; Eungie Joo, curator of the 2015 Sharjah Biennial; and Jessica Morgan, artistic director of the 10th Gwangju Biennale and curator of International Art at the Tate Modern in London. Such programming, coupled with a rapidly maturing Asian art market and the rise of Chinese art exhibitions across the US, will help draw record numbers of collectors to the fair.

Given that Asia’s potential as a major center for collectors and curators is only starting to be tapped, it’s no surprise that Art Basel in Hong Kong is generating excitement on both sides of the Pacific, and particularly for Renfrew. “The highlight is exposing new audiences to the depth of work from the region, and being part of that experience when collectors discover artists they have not yet seen—or when curators join in dialogue with artists whose work they have long followed.” artbasel.com/en/hong-kong **MA**

ASIAN INFLUENCE

Top guns in Chicago's art world on the impact of Art Basel Hong Kong.

“Art Basel is the most professional organizer of fairs in the world, hands down. Collectors are more willing to do business with galleries they meet at these top fairs. If Art Basel in Hong Kong can help remove impediments and replace them with trust, relationships develop faster between gallery, artist, and collector.” —*Paul Gray, director of Richard Gray Gallery*

“I’m excited by the growing number of collectors in the region who are willing to engage with artists, in the form of studio visits and commissioned works, and take a more active role in the development of their collections.” —*Adrian Wong, sculptor and performance artist*

“ABHK has grown the art market. The growth potential has always been exciting, and attending has helped me get a better understanding of the market.” —*Robert Casterline, comanager of G2 Art Fund and cofounder of Casterline Goodman Gallery*