

Market trends

American Renaissance

Look around the art world this year and it's hard to miss a renewed interest in American artists. After the Centre Pompidou's massive retrospective of Los Angeles art, the upcoming "USA Today" exhibition at the Royal Academy in London features American artists drawn from the collection of Charles Saatchi. "When Charles showed me the images for this show, I got very excited," recalls Royal Academy exhibitions secretary Norman Rosenthal. "America had some bad innings for the last ten or 15 years. When I went to New York, I never sensed a lot going on in terms of anything new develop-



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—Zach Feuer

ing. But with this new generation you have something monumental and refined. Terence Koh (see p1) is like the other side of Bruce Nauman and Banks Violette is like the other side of Matthew Barney."

Furthermore, after highlighting German and Eastern European artists in recent years, the Rubell family collection's exhibition during Art Basel Miami Beach in December—often a market bellwether—will feature many works from Los Angeles artists. Titled "Red Eye" (in reference to the countless overnight flights the

family and their curator Mark Coetzee logged in amassing the works), the show mixes established artists such as John Baldessari, Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy and Charles Ray with the city's young guns, including Thomas Houseago, Nathan Mabry, Matthew Monahan, Kaz Oshiro and Ry Rocklen.

American galleries such as Zach Feuer, which represents six out of 25 artists in "USA Today", including Dana Schutz and Jules de Balincourt, are finding a heightened appetite for US art among Europeans. "There was a perception that American art is quick and dumb, and that's changing," Feuer says. "People are realizing that's not true, though I'm not sure if the art changed, or if it's just the shifting zone of art world attention that goes from Germany to China to Poland and now to America." Also, he suggests, the rest of the world has perhaps caught on to American art as a result of interacting so much with the country's jet-setting collectors.

London dealer Maureen Paley, who recently added Banks Violette and photographer James Welling to her roster (and is herself a long-term expatriate American), suggests the work coming out of the States has evolved in a new direction. "The generation of artists who figured in the last two Whitney Museum biennials are darker—more melancholy and contemplative," she explains. "It's a different stance."

If so, it seems one to which European collectors and curators can better relate. When Berlin and Zurich dealer Matthias Arndt debuted de Balincourt in Berlin recently, most of the show sold to Germans and other Europeans. Still, he cautions that not all American art travels well. "There's still a lot of mediocre work there,



and only excellent artists can compete in Europe, which has always been a bit of a survival test for Americans," says Arndt, who this year also added Americans Josephine Meckseper's and Douglas Kolk to his gallery's list. "Germany has always been strong in terms of having artists, but we're happy to see the spotlight shift to Americans rather than collectors just seeking out the fourth and fifth wave of painters from Dresden and Leipzig."

Marc Spiegler

Inka Essenigh's *Blue Wave*, 2002. Below (left to right): Banks Violette's *Kill Yourself (Twin)*, 2006; Jules de Balincourt's *Untitled*, 2006; and Dana Schutz's *Man with a Video Camera*, 2006



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