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# THE ART NEWSPAPER

ART BASEL/MIAMI BEACH SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2005

## Frenzied buying but not all sales are final

*Closing report: ArtBasel/Miami Beach*

Gisela Capitain and Friedrich Petzel (C14) were celebrating with a bottle of champagne in the stand they share yesterday, as they totalled up their sales at the fair. "This is the best we've ever done here," said Ms Capitain. Among her many sales were a large painting by Georg Herold for around \$500,000 and a set of three Jorge Pardo wall sculptures (\$65,000). Another gallery direc-

tor (who requested anonymity) told The Art Newspaper: "We haven't beaten our art fair sales record, but with two more days to go we could hit seven figures."

Similar stories were repeated across the fair. "This year was much better than last," said Patricia Riestra of the Mexican gallery OMR (E13), who sold works by Candida Höfer, Bonnie Seeman, and had a first-day frenzy for Melanie Smith, selling four prints from the British-born Mexican photographer's "Vanishing landscape" series. "I've never had a waiting list before," she said.

Cecile Panzieri of New York's Sean Kelly (E8) said they did "incredible business again this year, selling to about 90% new clients." The most expensive work in the booth, an Antony Gormley sculpture, sold for \$350,000 on the first day to a museum trustee in California. The gallery also sold two of Marina Abramovic's erotic breast-massaging videos titled *Balkan erotic epic* (see right), the subject of a show at the New York gallery opening next week. Cheim & Read from New York (D3) sold a Joan Mitchell oil, (\$1.5 million), four Louise Bourgeois sculptures (editions of six) for \$325,000 each, a Jack Pierson for \$150,000 and four Donald Baechler bronzes at \$60,000/75,000. "The energy is fantastic," said Mr Read.

The energy began on the first day with "total chaos, like a rugby match, a frenzy," according to Linda Goodman of Goodman Gallery from Johannesburg (E6), whose booth featured William Kentridge, currently the subject of an exhibition at Miami Art

Central. "Within the first hour all our most expensive works sold," she said. These included pieces by Deborah Bell, Robert Hodgins and a William Kentridge acquired by a European private collector, while another Kentridge installation went to a Middle Eastern museum.

There were reports that fewer Europeans attended the fair this year, partly because of the art world's increasingly busy fair schedule. Europeans have already had the contemporary art fairs, FIAC (Paris), Frieze (London) and Art Cologne this autumn.

"Last year we had more South Americans and Europeans. This year there were more Americans and institutions," said director Olivier Bélot of Galerie Yvon

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### ArtBasel/Miami Beach in numbers

**OVER 100** Museum groups

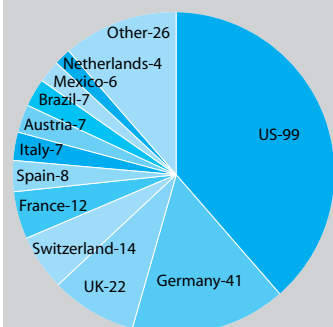
**1000** Journalists covering the fair, up from 800 last year

**3,000** Number of UBS clients from 14 countries at the fair

**6,000** Attendance at vernissage

**185** NetJets arrivals, 40% increase over last year

**\$2,000,000,000** estimated value of art at ArtBasel/Miami Beach according to AXA Fine Art Insurance



**Galleries at ABMB by country**  
see page 8 for more statistics

# Frenzied buying but not all sales are final

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Lambert from Paris (D6). Nevertheless, Thaddaeus Ropac (Salzburg/Paris) (E9) said he sold to a “good mix” of collectors, mostly private, including “great European collectors.” The gallery sold Silvie Fleury fibreglass mushrooms to a private collector in Spain, as well as four works by Tony Cragg, including a 10-foot-tall cherry column acquired by a private collector in California on the first day. “We did even more business than last year,” said Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts of the gallery. Over at Art Positions, Mennour (P8) has sold Abdessemed’s crushed Lear Jet to a private Swiss collector (price undisclosed).

James Cohan (F1) reported the arrival of “a large group of South American collectors new to us, and they’ve been buying.” Museums were also actively buying this week. Miami MoCA acquired an installation by Roxy Paine, an artist the museum has shown, and during the fair discussions with Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh “crystallized” a future

show of Trenton Doyle Hancock, he said.

## Collectors strike back

Several dealers were voicing concern about collectors reserving pieces only to “unreserve” them later. Yesterday in one booth a dealer was demanding to know whether a client wanted to put a “hold” or “strong hold” on a desired piece.

In today’s super-heated market, dealers want snap decisions, so collectors are counter attacking by reserving all the works of art they might want to buy, and then making their final decisions later.

“Most people seem to be doing amazing business, but the euphoria of the first night has been somewhat diluted by lots of cancellations,” said London dealer Anthony Reynolds (C7). “I think it’s really unhealthy for the market, and a totally stupid tactic on the part of the collectors, because we remember who does it and tell our colleagues, too.” Mr Reynolds reported serious interest in Mark Wallinger’s installa-

tion piece *Painting the divide* at £45,000; one had already sold by noon on Saturday.

Sales continued steadily throughout the fair, and Andrea Rosen (C15), who sold works by Pollock and Calder said, “People take their time and come back

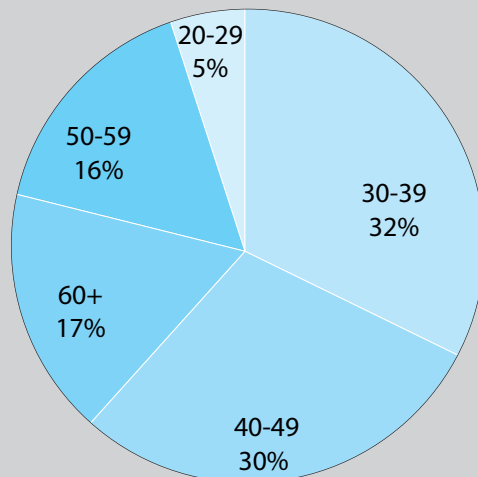
when buying at our level,” she said, noting she had seen “a great mixture of top tier collectors as well as people just getting into the market.”

In the art world one sure-fire measure of fair’s sales is the timbre of Sean Kelly’s normally

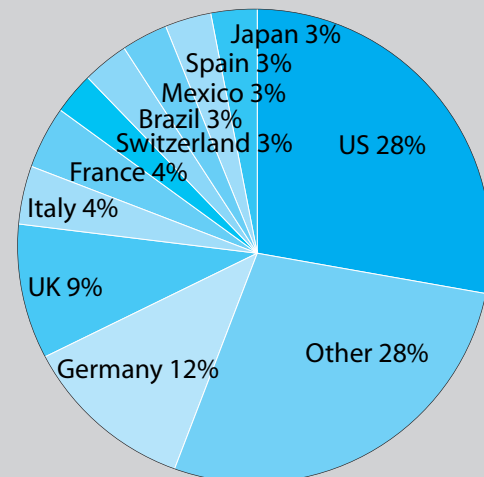
booming voice, which tends to grow softer and raspier as he spends more time talking to clients. By yesterday morning, Mr Kelly was barely audible.

**Georgina Adam,  
Jason Kaufman,  
Brook S. Mason and Marc Spiegler**

## ■ The artists on display at ArtBasel/Miami Beach



Artists exhibited by age



Artists by nationality