LONDON. “We’re just praying it doesn’t rain,” said Frieze tent architect Jamie Fobert before the fair opened to a select 500 VIPs at 11am yesterday. His prayers were not answered, and an hour later the heavens opened and deluged the tent, causing a flood between the Gagosian and Bonakdar stands (EB and DB) and closing the entry ramp. “Fortunately everyone important was already inside,” said Maureen Paley (D7). And indeed all the major collectors were already there.

Weaving through the aisles was the French billionaire and owner of Christie’s, François Pinault, occasionally passing by Patricia Marshall, who buys for his arch-rival, LVMH owner Bernard Arnault. She quickly negotiated the purchase of David Noonan’s Untitled for his arch-rival, LVMH by Patricia Marshall, who also buys for Christian Dior’s chairman, Karl Lagerfeld.

The Miami-based collector and Saatchi with the Italian, Swiss-based collector Jean Pigozzi, spotted walking through the stands included Charles Saatchi with the Italian, Swiss-based collector Jean Pigozzi, and Ariane Grigoltov, who is a director of the Deutsche Bank Collection.

LONDON. Tate has purchased 28 works from Frieze thanks to the fair’s Special Acquisitions Fund which provides a group of curators with £250,000 and early access to the fair to buy art. This year’s curatorial team included Eric Troncy, director of Le Consortium in Dijon, Douglas Fogle, contemporary curator at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, and Tate curators Jessica Morgan, Frances Morris and Anne Gallagher.

The works bought included several works on paper by Scottish artist David Shrigley, and five photographs by last year’s Turner Prize winner Simon Starling. Louisa Buck for a full list of Tate’s purchases see p4

How people reacted to the Wrong Gallery

LONDON. Visitors to Frieze yesterday had mixed reactions to the Wrong Gallery’s re-enactment of Gino De Dominicis’s 1972 Venice Biennale performance “Second solution of immortality: the universe is immobile” in which a man with Down’s Syndrome contemplated three objects. The Wrong Gallery (F28) replaces the man with Susan Billington, an actress with Down’s Syndrome from the Baked Bean Theatre Company, who specialises in playing men.

Stephen Tobias, Vice President at Norfolk Southern Railway in Seattle, rolled his eyes and exchanged glances with his friend and fellow businessman, James Kern. “All I will say,” Tobias quipped, “is that I wish I could email a picture of that [installation] back to New York, and see the looks on my friends’ faces.” Kern agreed, dismissing the installation as “nothing more than a way to get a reaction out of people. Something like that would never fly in New York,” he said.

Miami collector Don Rubell said: “It is a great piece”, while his wife Mera, said: “It’s nice to have some history at a fair like this, to bring back some pieces of the past.” Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, grandson of Pablo Picasso, said: “I find the piece so moving, a very strong statement of meaning, and truly beautiful. It was like being inside a sacred space, a church.”

Nikolai Ahrens, managing director of investment banking at Citigroup in London, called the work “contrived” and said: “I guess it’s telling us that the world is immobile, but I don’t really understand it.”

Others said the piece lacked context. An Italian collector who goes by the name of “Paolo” said that the piece “does not belong here, in an art fair, but rather at the Venice Biennale. It makes no sense here.”

Sheena Wagstaff, head of exhibitions at Tate Modern said: “It is patronising to people with mental disabilities to be offended by this piece. It is exactly what art fairs like Frieze should be doing.”

New York dealer, Jeffrey Deitch praised the installation for its “outrageous but profound quality,” as well as the gallery because it makes projects that “stand in your mind intellectually and visually for a long time.”

What Tate bought at Frieze

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Even the celebrities are up on last year
First night report on Frieze

Iwan Wirth, “We’re seeing all the big-time European collectors,” said Carolyn Ramo, director of Nicole Klagsbrun (F19). However, Manchester collector Frank Cohen bemoaned the bullish market saying: “You want to pay young prices for young artists, but the £2,000-20,000 price tags have gone out of the window.” And Michaela Neumeister of Phillips de Pury auction house, which has just opened a new saleroom in London, said: “I think it’s a good fair but it’s also frustrating to new collectors, because so much of the great material is pre-sold to major buyers. The newer collectors don’t really have a chance, unless they’re advised by someone like Philippe Ségalot whose clients include François Pinault.”

And while the conventional wisdom used to hold that nothing much could sell at over £100,000 in Frieze, Ms Neumeister says: “I don’t think you can get anything very serious for less than $100,000 these days.” Indeed, Wirth confirmed that the price points are rising at Frieze. “The most expensive piece we took to the last edition cost £250,000,” he says. “This year, we brought a half-million dollar Paul McCarthy and it sold right away. Last year, we couldn’t have got that price here.”

Georgina Adam, Marc Spiegler, Ossian Ward and Gareth Harris

With additional reporting by Louisa Buck, Rami Kim and Helen Stolars

Gabriel Kuri, Untitled, 2006, painted plywood, weatherproof varnish, 135 x 135cm, £10,000. From Galleria, Francesco Maccaro, Turin.


Catherine Sullivan, The Resuscitation of Uplifting, 2005, video transferred from 16mm film, with sound. From Galerie Catherine Bastide, Brussels.


Bruno Serralongue, Friday 28, 2006, video, 2000-06. From Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne.


The Art Newspaper/Frieze Art Fair Daily Thursday 12 October 2006

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Please contact Alexander Hayter for further details: alexander@bloomsburyauctions.com