

TRUE COLORS

The Week Los Angeles Ate the Art World

Ari was buying. Gwyneth was browsing. And Owen was everywhere. This year's Frieze week in Hollywood brought out the usual A-list collectors—but it also suggested that the city's long-gestating status as art capital is moving into its next phase. Plus, Damien Hirst's 180, an up-close view of the vibe shift, and more in this week's column.

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Ari Emanuel went to work Thursday morning, but not at the Beverly Hills headquarters of Endeavor, the ever-morphing agency he cofounded in the '90s and took public last year. Emanuel arrived at the Beverly Hilton, just five minutes away from his office even in midmorning traffic, and strolled into Frieze Los Angeles—an art fair that is mostly owned by Endeavor—10 minutes before the doors officially opened. In short order, he popped up at the Ortuzar Projects booth, taking calls while appearing to pick out a work by **Suzanne Jackson**, and then later looked very much like he was trying to purchase a large-scale sculpture by **Woody De Othello** at the booth of the East Village gallery Karma.

Swirling around Emanuel were famous faces—**Owen Wilson**, **Gwyneth Paltrow**, **Will Ferrell**, **James Corden**—and collectors such as **Maurice Marciano**, **Howard Rachofsky**, and **Maja Hoffmann**, all of whom had come by Frieze during what turned out to be almost certainly the most frenzied week of contemporary-art transacting in the history of Los Angeles. It's been six years since Endeavor bought 70% of the London-based art magazine and fair company, and since then the art infrastructure has gone from zero to 100 in the City of Angels.

"I'm not sure if it ever was a *backwater town*, but..." Frieze Los Angeles director **Christine Messineo** told me earlier this week, sipping English breakfast while sitting poolside at the Beverly Hilton, the retro-glam hospitality mecca smack-dab in the middle of 90210 that hosts the fair. It was two days before the fair let in the most powerful of VIPs with access to a 10 a.m. time slot, and the pool deck was already crawling with fair directors, art-tech interlopers, lunching collectors, and dealers getting a jump start on off-loading six-figure paintings.

"L.A.'s always been known to its locals. We have such a strong collector base, and they collect from and support their local galleries," Messineo went on. "What we're seeing is this energy that was facilitated a bit by Frieze arriving in 2019, before the pandemic.

Messineo herself saw the change happen in real time. After a decade running galleries in New York, she moved to the West Coast seven years ago to be a director at the pioneering Hannah Hoffman Gallery, which opened in the prehistoric L.A.-art-scene days of 2013. Once upon a time, Hoffman **told me that she could go multiple days without a single person coming by the gallery**. That is no longer the case. On Friday, Hoffman opened a show of new work by **Rochelle Feinstein**. Foot traffic streamed in throughout the day.

Since Messineo joined Hannah Hoffman way back when, Christie's and Sotheby's have both built out dramatic picture-selling emporiums flanking either side of Mr. Chow in Beverly Hills. In the last two weeks, global powerhouse galleries such as Pace and Lisson announced they would join Sprüth Magers and Gagosian in a Tinseltown takeover. And recently, **Barbara Gladstone** opened up an office in L.A. and deployed director at large **Cooke Maroney** (a.k.a. Mr. **Jennifer Lawrence**) to put new pictures on the walls of the mega-mansions in the Hills. In 2016, Hauser & Wirth opened its massive space in the Arts District, and it's in the process of opening a second space in West Hollywood. On Thursday, **David Zwirner** finally publicly spilled the details on the space that's **long been known to be opening** on Western Avenue. Come January 2023, Zwirner will have a three-story space in Hollywood that will be programmed with shows by the gallery's deep roster of artists all year round.

Museums clearly feel bolstered by the new energy too. LACMA's **Michael Govan** fought right through the

critics—most notably and volubly the *Los Angeles Times*' ink-stained art wretch, **Christopher Knight**—to go ahead with the institution's **Peter Zumthor**-designed extension. **George Lucas** spurned his hometown of San Francisco and elected to open his massive museum in L.A.'s Exposition Park in 2023, and MOCA is looking to get a fresh start courtesy of its popular new director, **Johanna Burton**, the first woman to run the museum in its history.

“In terms of MOCA's place, it's been in the center of a lot of conversations that other museums are also a part of, but in some ways we're more spotlit,” she said, perhaps alluding to the amount of attention paid to her museum over the last decade, as it went through **director crises, curator crises, and board member crises**.

We were running through its current **Jennifer Packer** show at a quick clip, as it was after 5 p.m., and a museum director's job during an art fair requires them to spend quite a lot of time outside of the museum in the evenings.

“I think I have six invitations to dinner each *night*,” Burton said.

The festivities began nearly a full week before the fair opened—another reminder of the immense growth of the city's gallery district. On Saturday, there was a crowd befitting the outside of the Echoplex at the white-hot Matthew Brown Los Angeles, whose eponymous owner is 25 years young. Hired muscle manned the door as crowds packed in to see electrifying new works by **Alfonso Gonzalez Jr.**, who was trained in sign painting and graphics, a background that's far away from the cookie-cutter incubators that are the East Coast art schools. On Monday, young collector **Jack Siebert** and curator **Caio Twombly** (Cy's grandson) unveiled an all-female group show, and the next night Pace hosted a bash at the Chateau Marmont that drew **Kim Kardashian**—accompanied not by boyfriend **Pete Davidson** but by mom **Kris Jenner**—and **Mary-Kate** and **Ashley Olsen**.

On the other side of town on Tuesday night, **François Ghebaly** unveiled sensational new work by **Sayre Gomez**, a suite of dreamy-surreal sunset landscapes of Los Angeles as seen from a car. Not only did Ghebaly time the opening to coincide with the start of Frieze, but he also closed the space for nearly a month prior for a full top-to-bottom reno, the better to greet guests such as retired NFL linebacker (and USC alum) turned collector **Keith Rivers**, artists **Jonas Wood** and **Sterling Ruby**, and budding L.A. power collectors **Ric Whitney** and **Tina Perry**, the president of the Oprah Winfrey Network

On Wednesday, Serpentine directors **Hans Ulrich Obrist** and **Bettina Korek** hosted a bash at the Versailles-size palace of movie producer—and Walmart heiress—**Sybil Robson Orr**, located in the Bird Streets. A **James Turrell** Skyspace hung above the heads of guests such as **Alex Israel** and, again, Owen Wilson, who was sometimes wandering around solo, taking in the work. But guests generally rested up for the Frieze opening the following morning, which was preceded by a breakfast with a full bar at 9 a.m., where actor **Jane Seymour** knocked into **Don** and **Mera Rubell**.

And while the work on view tended to take second banana in the opening hours to the flash of celebrity, galleries ably sold work. A bust with a Gazing Ball by **Jeff Koons** sold for just under \$3 million at Pace—which **Marc Glimcher** confirmed will open in La La Land in April, with a show of the one contemporary artist to truly take the talking by storm, **Julian Schnabel**—and Gagosian moved a showstopping Chris Burden sculpture to a European institution for just around \$1.65 million.

As the day went on, collectors came and went from the fair to the hotel for lunch, or left for one of the many gallery shows in town—**Gary Simmons** at Hauser & Wirth, **Lucy Dodd** at Sprüth Magers, **Rachel Harrison** at Regen Projects, **Josh Kline** at LAXART. Others went off to Felix L.A., the decidedly looser satellite fair, where the booths are housed in suites and cabanas at the Hollywood Roosevelt hotel. Instead of a tent dotted with walled-off, members-only VIP rooms—imagine what kind of rager goes down in Frieze’s Deutsche Bank Wealth Management Lounge—Felix has a bunch of kids in bathing suits lounging poolside immediately outside of the booths.

What it lacked in billionaires it made up for in spontaneity and sunshine. Behind a booth in a bungalow, **Dinos Chapman**—one half of **Jake** and Dinos Chapman, the Turner-nominated, now defunct duo that took the YBA art world by storm in the ’90s—had set up a nail salon where he gave manicures for free for four hours a day, effectively running a salon as performance art.

I asked Chapman why he would volunteer himself to do such a thing.

“Poverty. Boredom. I like touching ladies’ hands and gentlemen’s feet,” he said. “And I do like the suffering. I like to do things I really don’t like to do.”

The Rundown

Your crib sheet for comings and goings in the art world this week and beyond...

...In past years, Frieze L.A. has gone down immediately following the Oscars, making for a wonderful bit of art-meets-showbiz singularity the weekend before the fair. This year, with the movie stars waiting until a pandemic-delayed Academy Awards at the end of March, there was something even bigger than the Super Bowl of the silver screen: the Super Bowl itself. And like a Hollywood movie filmed in Hollywood, the L.A. Rams were victorious in L.A., setting the tone for a week of victory-lapping and back-slapping between collectors and dealers. Among the art-world denizens present at SoFi Stadium for the big game were artist **Alex Israel**, TikToking away; collectors **Lauren** and **Benedikt Taschen**; dealers **Arty Nelson** and **Bill Powers**; and collector **Alex Arnault**, who ’grammed himself before the game tossing around a pigskin pigmented in Tiffany blue. Touchdown, branding!

...**Tremaine Emory**, the founder of art-forward brand Denim Tears and a collaborator with **Frank Ocean** and the late Virgil Abloh, has been named the creative director of Supreme—a genius appointment. Congrats to all involved.

...Billionaire **Nicolas Berggruen** showed off his French skills this week while stopping by Clearing’s Beverly Hills outpost to see new works by **Loïc Raguénès**. The artist’s English is a bit rusty, but the Paris-born Berggruen and Clearing founder **Olivier Babin** and **Laurence Dujardyn** ably led the group in lightspeed French, leaving other gallerygoers a bit perplexed.

...Gagosian is about to open an out-of-left-field show of new work by **Damien Hirst** at its Gstaad gallery. In a different look for the artist best known for chopping up dead animals, Hirst has produced a series of photo-realistic black-and-white drawings of extremely famous people. It's called *Myths, Legends and Monsters* and is made up of depictions of people Hirst feels fit into one of said categories, such as Sid Vicious, Marlon Brando, and Sharon Tate. There's even a portrait of his art dealer, **Larry Gagosian**, standing next to Jean-Michel Basquiat, which can be yours for a cool \$350,000.

...Spotted at LACMA, admiring work by **Toyin Ojih Odutola** and **Kerry James Marshall: Pierce Brosnan!** The former 007 is known to be a bit of a collector himself.

...One of the cooler things on sale this week in Los Angeles is a shirt that local hero Kobe Bryant was wearing during practice shots before his historic 81-point masterpiece performance against the Toronto Raptors in January 2006. It's on view at Sotheby's in Beverly Hills. Bidding starts at \$200,000—a mere \$2,500 per point, give or take—though it's likely to go way higher. There's also an NFT involved, but, you know, the less said about that, the better.

Scene Report: Prada Mode Los Angeles

Just after midnight on Wednesday, hours before the opening of Frieze L.A., the artist **Martine Syms** was sitting in Genghis Cohen, the New York–style Chinese restaurant in the heart of Los Angeles, trying to capture the sense of self on the left coast. Behind her, as artist **Diamond Stingily** and actor **Jeff Goldblum** milled around her, and joints were sparked and cheefed, an LED screen streaked through the restaurant. Phrases scrolled by: “I AM SO HAPPY TO BE HERE,” “RUNNING 30 MINS BEHIND SORRY TRAFFIC,” “I WOULD HAVE TO BELIEVE IN THINGS,” and “PURRRRRRRR.”

“If you DM this account, the text appears on the screen,” said Syms's gallerist, **Bridget Donahue**, somewhat helpfully, somewhat cryptically, as she pulled up Instagram on her phone.

What was at first somewhat inscrutable came into full view after a spin through the restaurant—just had to get by the models posing for **Mark “The Cobrasnake” Hunter** like it was 2007. It was all part of Syms's installation, *Hella World*. Along with the scrolling text—some of which was generated by guests, some of which was taken from text messages the artist's L.A. pals had sent her in recent weeks on nights when they were planning to go out—there was video work installed throughout, plus a series of talks and performances during the day. It was commissioned by Italian luxury house Prada as part of Prada Mode, the brand's itinerant art-as-party concern that started with a **Theaster Gates** takeover of the Freehand in Miami, and has brought immersive experiences to Maxim's in Paris and the Strand in London.

As to be expected in a city that is, to put it mildly, image-conscious, the crush of people who wanted to get into a Prada party at Frieze Los Angeles exceeded the small capacity of a modest chow fun joint. Artist **Jordan Wolfson** made it past the swarm of those penned in line outside, alongside his gallerist, the London dealer **Sadie Coles**. They quickly took a spot in a section of the restaurant that had been transformed into a mini Italian discotheque, not unlike the one artist **Carsten Höller** installed some years ago in the white cubes of **Miuccia Prada's** regal art foundation in Milan. Alongside Wolfson, fellow artists moving through the crowd included **Olivia Erlanger**, **Jon Rafman**, **Matt Copson**, **Tyler Mitchell**, and **Calvin Marcus**.

But the artists had to be present for the daytime openings, the dealers had to be sprightly in their booths the next morning, and by 1 a.m. the crowd was less Frieze and more frenzied, a slurry of hangers-on and scenesters swaying in the weed smoke. Of course, that didn't matter one bit to The Cobrasnake, who went on snapping his flashbulb on the road back to his reported vibe-shifted relevancy.

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