



**13TH SOFA CHICAGO 2006 WRAP-UP REPORT:
NEW CLIENTS, YOUNGER COLLECTORS RESPOND TO GROWING MIX OF MEDIA
BOTH TWO AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL**

[View Artist/Dealer Interviews and Sold Art](#)

CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 16, 2006. The curtain went up dramatically last Thursday on the 13th Annual International Exposition of Sculpture Objects & Functional Art, the largest and longest continuously running art exposition in Chicago and the American Midwest. A record 3200 guests enjoyed the elegant Opening Night *Mise en Scène* at Navy Pier's Festival Hall and the increasingly eclectic mix of fine and decorative art on offer at the fair. The new VIP Lounge on Terrace B was a big hit with top collectors, made possible by SOFA sponsors Chubb Personal Insurance and Collectify. Attendance at SOFA CHICAGO was estimated at 33,000 persons, up 3000 from last year.

Scott Jacobson of **Leo Kaplan Modern, NY, NY**, said, "Attendance seemed definitely up, with a younger crowd." Representative of galleries presenting an increasing range of artworks at the show, LKM sold **Dan Dailey's** blown glass sculpture *Domino* for \$58,000, new, large-scale two-dimensional cast glass panels by **Richard Jolley** for \$25,000, as well as fanciful functional art in wood by **Jay Stanger** and **Yves Boucard** (\$18,000 each).

Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, has led the way at SOFA expositions in exhibiting painting and photography as well as sculptural objects and functional art—a blend that led to almost a complete sellout at the gallery's stand. Victor Armendariz said the gallery enjoyed "A fabulous Opening Night. The show's great this year, floor has been packed."

Ruth Snyderman of **Snyderman-Works Galleries, Philadelphia**, which exhibited fiber art, jewelry, as well as drawings and stained glass light panels by **Judith Schaechter**, said, "We have never had crowds as large as this year. Opening Night and Friday were fantastic for everyone. There was so much energy."

Duane Reed Gallery, St. Louis, also exhibiting both two and three-dimensional art, said, "SOFA has done a great job at getting the word out (to the mainstream art world). We sold two large-scale **Danny Perkins** sculptures to a fine art collector in his early 50s, who had never acquired any works in glass. It was his first visit to SOFA, and I know he purchased major works in other media from other SOFA galleries." Reed said at past SOFA's he had sold 80% to established clients, but "this year it was half and half—and new buyers seemed "under 60." Reed said he had a "very good show" overall including the sale of *Chocolat* by **Rudy Autio** for the asking price of \$42,000.

Key galleries specializing in sculpture in the medium of glass at top price points, **Heller Gallery, NY, NY** and **Holsten Galleries, Stockbridge, MA** reported steady sales. Heller Gallery sold major large-scale sculptures by Czech artists **Ivana Šrámková** and **Vladimira Klumplar**. Douglas Heller reported "good sales results across all his artists," which he felt was a reflection of the fact that "Chicago is a city that seems to embrace (SOFA)." On Sunday morning, Kenn Holsten reported selling ten large-scale sculptures

by Italian maestro, **Lino Tagliapietra** in its stunning solo exhibition celebrating Tagliapietra's 60th year of working in glass. An interesting related sale occurred at the booth of **Thomas R. Riley Galleries, Cleveland, OH**, which sold *Chihuly Wedding Set* by Tagliapietra, commissioned by **Dale Chihuly** (whom Tagliapietra taught Venetian glassblowing technique).

Sales Director Corey Hampson of **Habatat Galleries, Chicago and Royal Oak, MI** reported "tremendous sales" during SOFA CHICAGO, selling out almost all of the large-scale sculpture in glass by **Daniel Clayman** that it brought to the show, including *Raceme* for \$56,000. Hampson said *Raceme* was purchased by collectors George and Dorothy Sachs as a promised gift to a California museum. Also selling well were **Martin Blank** and **Petr Hora** glass sculptures, all five works by **Irene Frolic**, as well as a \$60,000 piece by **Margie Toth**, who produces only two sculptures as year.

Ferrin Gallery, Lenox, MA had perhaps the showstopper artwork at the fair, *All Nations Have their Moments of Foolishness* by **Richard Notkin**, which sold for \$35,000. George W. Bush's face ominously emerges from Notkin's mosaic of individual ceramic tiles depicting iconic scenes of death and destruction. Another top seller at Ferrin Gallery was *Body Guard* by **Sergei Isupov** for \$45,000, a painterly porcelain sculpture from the gallery's focus show honoring its 10th year association with Isupov. Leslie Ferrin said, "We really feel like the top collectors were here...from the Midwest, San Francisco, East Coast, everywhere. They know to come here [SOFA CHICAGO] to find the best in the field." Ferrin reported selling several pieces to museums and estimated 25% of sales were to new clients.

Tom Grotta of **browngrotta arts, Wilton, CT**, an international fiber arts gallery, said they had "the best Opening Night ever at a SOFA show," and a "particularly successful exposition." He credited the success in part to a synergy created by the *Material Difference* fiber art special exhibits at the Chicago Cultural Center and SOFA, and an increased number of SOFA galleries exhibiting fiber. He also noted that "one of the things that sets SOFA CHICAGO apart from other fairs is that the artist community attends in great numbers. The buyers seem very responsive to the interaction with the artists."

Tom Grotta added that SOFA's extensive **Lecture Series** was a key factor in attracting artists and buyers and encouraging interaction. Douglas Heller of **Heller Gallery, New York**, also noted the importance of the lectures in "creating a focus that is very positive." A record number of 3000 persons attended 31 SOFA CHICAGO Lecture Series presentations this year.

Fiber arts dealer Jane Sauer of **Jane Sauer Thirteen Moons Gallery, Santa Fe, NM**, was another SOFA exhibitor successfully adding a mix of media to her presentation this year. Sauer said, "I love SOFA! It's has such a warm tone. Visitors are sophisticated and ask good questions—they feel comfortable here and don't feel foolish asking questions. I've exhibited in 3 consecutive SOFAs now, and each show I've increased my stand by 1 booth size—it's been economically sensible and well worth the gamble." Top sales at Thirteen Moons included all of **Jan Hopkins'** female torso sculptures in various fibrous materials, selling in the \$12,000 range.

SOFA is known as an excellent venue to present new talent and Nancy McIlvaine held back three large mixed-media wall works by newcomer **Barbara Kohl-Spiro** from

Portals Ltd's, Chicago sellout show of her work at its home gallery in September. By Sunday morning, Portals had sold six of ten of Kohl-Spiro's works at SOFA. McIlvaine said this year's crowd "was totally different" with noticeably new and younger buyers, including some "in their mid-30's" and many from out-of-town—"very few pieces will stay in Chicago." She also noted an uptick in cross-buying between media.

Perhaps the most artworks sold by a single artist at SOFA CHICAGO were large-scale *Muranese* technique glass sculptures by **Davide Salvatore** at **William Traver Gallery, Seattle and Tacoma, WA**, selling in the \$15 – 25,000 range. Salvatore pointed out the role that the sense of touch plays in many artworks at SOFA: "I encourage my audience to have a real encounter with each piece: I want them to touch it, and to understand the shapes and movements." Three Salvatore sculptures sold Opening Night, and as of Sunday morning, twelve had been acquired, with the gallery reporting commissions for three more.

The Irish took SOFA by storm with **The Craft Council of Ireland** presenting a major Special Exhibit of Irish art, *Forty Shades of Green* at the show. **The National Craft Gallery of Ireland, Kilkenny, Ireland** participating for the first time as an exhibitor, enjoyed one of the major sales of the fair, selling Joseph Walsh's *Collector's Armoire* for \$91,000. "We couldn't have gotten a better response," raved **National Craft Gallery Curator of Projects**, Brian Kennedy. Kennedy reported multiple artists have connected with galleries eager to represent them in the U.S. Museums have expressed interest in many of the works, and collector groups are planning to organize trips to visit the gallery in Ireland.

Danish design galleries also fared well at the show. SOFA CHICAGO 2006 marked the fourth year that **Galleri Grønlund, Copenhagen, Denmark** has exhibited at SOFA. Anne Merete Grønlund reported the fair felt particularly busy which translated into strong sales and approximately 30% new clients. Major focus exhibits by two of her artists working in glass, **Tobias Møhl** and **Stephan Dam**, sold out almost entirely.

An emerging area at SOFA CHICAGO, Asian art also did well at the exposition, with new exhibitor **Galerie Vee, Hong Kong** specializing in glass sculpture from China selling major glass sculptures by **Zhuang Xiao Wei** and **Wang Qin**.

Crowds at SOFA CHICAGO remained heavy over the weekend and dealers reported steady sales across a variety of media and price points. **Mark Lyman, Founder/Director of SOFA** expositions in Chicago and New York said, "This was the largest SOFA exposition we have ever produced. We were delighted to see the galleries stretching with larger booth spaces, new artists and mixed media. It was a great show."

Lyman added, "SOFA is a well-established event in Chicago's arts calendar, and the city really showed its support, with attendance up 10%. Many thanks to Chubb Personal Insurance and Collectify for their generous sponsorship again this year—the custom-designed Chubb/Collectify VIP Lounge was a great place for SOFA VIPs to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the show floor."

Exciting plans are already underway for the 10th Anniversary SOFA NEW YORK 2007, June 1 – 3, with the Opening Night Preview Gala on May 31 again benefiting the Museum of Arts & Design.

Other top sales at SOFA CHICAGO 2006: [SEE LIVE UPDATES SOLD ART](#)

Mostly Glass Gallery, Englewood, NJ: *Crater*, S. Libensky/ J Brychtova: \$85,000.

Perimeter Gallery, Chicago: Toshiko Takeazu: \$25,000

Galerie Pokorná, Prague, Czech Republic: *Leaf*, Zora Palová: \$42,000

del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles: *Feather Basket*, William Hunter: \$26,500

Chappell Gallery, New York: *M060501*, Toshio Iezumi: \$22,000

Santa Fe Clay, Santa Fe, NM: *Marriage*, Sunkoo Yuh: \$13,500

Caterina Tognon Arte Contemporanea, Venice, Italy, *Be Happy*, Silvia Levensen:
(undisclosed amount)

Hawk Galleries, Columbus, OH: *Rhino*, Albert Paley: \$127,000.