

SOFA

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12TH ANNUAL SOFA NEW YORK 2009 ART FAIR: STRONG SALES AND STEADY ATTENDANCE AT FIRST SOFA FAIR PRODUCED BY NEW VENTURE

NEW YORK. April 19, 2009. Long considered the world's foremost fair for masterworks bridging contemporary decorative, fine art and design, the 12th annual International Sculpture Objects & Functional Art Fair at the Park Avenue Armory enjoyed buoyant sales and steady crowds from the vernissage on April 15 straight through its four day run ending on Sunday, April 19.

An estimated 17,000 collectors, curators, architects, interior designers, art advisors and new enthusiasts took in SOFA NEW YORK, the first produced by its new owner, [The Art Fair Company](#). Founding director of SOFA Mark Lyman recently reacquired the SOFA fairs from dmg world media, along with partner, Michael Franks, Chief Operating Officer of dmg. Lyman says, "We're delighted that even in this economic downturn, collectors came to buy and many dealers sold well. Michael and I share a deep commitment to SOFA and its potential for growth, and look forward to the successful launch of our new fair, [SOFA WEST: Santa Fe](#) this June."



SOFA NEW YORK Opening Night Preview, April 15



Pippin Drysdale's work in the Joanna Bird Pottery Booth at SOFA NEW YORK 2009

Even opening SOFA NEW YORK on tax day did not scare off buyers. Over 2200 persons jammed the vernissage over the course of the evening, and many supported The Museum of Arts & Design, New York by attending a benefit cocktail reception held concurrently in the Armory's Tiffany Room. Plucked up immediately from London dealer Joanna Bird was a Pippin Drysdale 2009 *Installation 1*, a series of carved, thrown ceramics for \$79,000. As of Saturday, Bird had racked up a dozen significant sales. Nearby, Leo Kaplan Modern of New York sold a Richard Jolley 2009 *Still Life* for \$38,000, while the Chicago Habatat Galleries red-dotted a Shayna Leib glass installation for \$46,000, selling close to a staggering 40 percent of its material on offer, including blown and cast glass sculptures by Oben Abright at \$38,000 each. "Initially we were concerned about the economic climate but clients are still seeking to buy," says Michael John Hofer, Habatat's Assistant Director.



Junko Mori (right) and guest in the Clare Beck at Adrian Sassoon booth.

Further proof of spirited sales Opening Night was Manhattan dealer Joan Mirviss selling five Miyashita Zenji's layered, opalescent stoneware priced up to \$15,000. Mirviss had 29 sales and of the 19 Miyashita pieces debuted in the United States, only three were left as of noon Sunday. "It's really startling—more than half the sales were to clients totally new to me. Collectors came from across the US, from California, Minnesota, Massachusetts and Washington, DC. And I was amazed Opening Night at the number of collectors who were not from this hemisphere."



Miyashita Zenji's work in the Joan B. Mirviss Ltd. booth

London dealer Clare Beck showing with the venerable Adrian Sassoon scored banner sales including works by metal artist Junko Mori, such as her large-scale steel 2009 *Propagation Project*, as well as striking hand-hammered gold and silver vessel forms by Hiroshi Suzuki.

"Longtime Belgian collectors flew in for SOFA for the first time," says Beck, attesting to the international reach of the fair. Sassoon adds, "We've sold examples by every single artist, including a large Hiroshi Suzuki, and some work went to collectors of 18th century antiques and art."

Collectors honed in on the Ferrin Gallery from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, purchasing a total of 15 works including Sergei Isupov's uncharacteristically monumental 2009 *Prelude* in stained and glazed stoneware for \$40,000. Gallery director Leslie Ferrin also achieved multiple sales during the show run of Chris Antemann's elegant parodies of classical decorative figurines, including a commission from New York-based interior designer Geoffrey Bradfield, best known for his residential commissions for international art collectors. Ferrin also secured a commission for a large-scale Gordon Chandler sculpture to be installed as an exterior architectural element at an eastern shore Maryland country home.



Guest viewing Sergei Isupov and Chris Antemann work in the Ferrin Gallery booth.



Lia Cook
PRESENCE/ABSENCE: GATHER
browngrotta arts

In addition, curators were acquiring work. For example, the Wilton, Connecticut browngrotta sold Lia Cook's sculptural hanging textile 1998 *Presence/Absence* to the Cleveland Museum of Art. The Tai Gallery from Santa Fe achieved a reserve on a contemporary 1980 Richard Landis textile *Chaparral* at \$24,000 to a Midwest museum. "So far 70% of my sales have been to painting collectors who own work by such artists as Gerhard Richter, Picasso and Philip Guston," says Tai Gallery director Rob Coffland. With the demand for sustainable materials at an all time high, he quickly sold Morigami Jin 2008 *Peerless* for a five figure sum along with four other examples.

Secondary market material was also sought after and Florida dealer Donna Schneier sold a Dan Dailey vessel for \$35,000, a large Michael Lucero sculpture, a Bertil Vallien glass sculpture, and three Robert Arneson ceramics. Schneier says, "It wasn't just glass and ceramic collectors buying work, it was also contemporary art collectors, for example, one collector to whom I delivered a piece had paintings by Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Sam Francis and Christo." Galerie Besson of London sold a major Hans Coper 1970 ceramic vessel form for \$32,000 and a prized Peter Collingwood textile to a well-known East Hampton collector.



Hans Coper
Galerie Besson



Lola Brooks' work in Sienna Gallery

Metal artistry from jewelry in gold and silver with precious stones to such far-out materials as spare rocket parts, took off at the Fair. New dealer Alistair Crawford, who offered his own designs in silver and gold, quickly sold a 18-carat gold and diamond bracelet for \$12,800. Then the Cambridge, Massachusetts Mobilia Gallery sold a number of brooches, bracelets and necklaces by artist jewelers as well as a Mariko Kusumoto large metal sculpture for \$50,000 to a Midwest collector. The Hudson, New York Ornamantum Gallery sold a Ted Noten acrylic necklace for \$27,000 to a Chicago collector, a Sergey

Jivetin brooch of fragile egg shells reinforced with Kevlar for \$6,000, as well as a necklace of small 18th century European cannon balls for \$11,000. Lenox, Massachusetts Sienna Gallery sold artist/designer Lola Brooks' highest priced piece, a necklace tagged at \$10,000 on Opening Night. Clare Beck at Adrian Sassoon sold an Adam Paxon hand-carved acrylic brooch for \$8,900. [View video interview of Sergey Jivetin at SOFA >](#)

Spotted shopping were prominent contemporary art dealers Sean Kelly, Barry Friedman and Hollis Taggart, collectors Nanette Laitman, Nancy Epstein, Barbara Tober, Charles Bronfman, real estate developer Larry Silverstein, and fashion designers Vera Wang and Mary McFadden. Of the more than 30 designers on the floor were Ellie Cullman, Mario Buatta, Geoffrey Bradfield, Kenneth Alpert, Amy Lau and Suzanne Lovell. David Ling, who designed the stunning SOFA NEW YORK VIP Lounge, spoke at the Thursday morning Designer Breakfast and show preview to a standing-room only crowd of 80 RSVPing interior designers and architects.



The SOFA NEW YORK 2009 VIP Lounge



Miyashita Zenji lectured Friday, April 17 as part of the SALON SOFA: Lecture Series.

The Salon SOFA program of lectures, artist conversations and book signings also were well attended, with over 400 enthusiasts taking in 9 lectures in the Armory's Tiffany Room. "The high number of attendees not only confirms the enthusiasm for first-hand knowledge of SOFA artists but also spills over into the sales arena," says Anne Meszko, Salon SOFA director. For example, Danish artist Steffan Dam with the Tribeca-based Heller Gallery spoke to a standing-room only crowd and by Saturday, Heller had sold 7 of his cast glass examples. Attendance in the second annual VIP program was up more than 30 percent to 550 taking in the exclusive events for high-level gallery clients and collector and museum groups, putting SOFA on the same platform as Art Basel. VIPs attending the Fair included membership groups and curators from The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Guggenheim, Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art

For [press images](#) and [general information](#) on SOFA Fairs, including art sold, show shots and artist interviews from the 12th annual SOFA NEW YORK 2009, ongoing through April 19 at the Park Avenue Armory, visit www.sofaexpo.com. The next SOFA Fair is [SOFA WEST: Santa Fe](#), June 11 – 14 at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center. Opening Night, Wednesday, June 10 benefits the New Mexico Museum of Art Design Collection.

[16th SOFA CHICAGO 2009](#), Nov. 6 - 8 at Navy Pier. For more information, call 800-563-SOFA (7632) or 773-506-8860; or email info@sofaexpo.com.

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