Day two sales: slow but sure?

SALES PROVED ELUSIVE for some galleries on day two, with comment around the stands on how greater footfall might help ease an otherwise cautious mood. One European gallerist was prompted to muse, “I thought this year would be busier compared to last, because of the Sharjah Biennial, but it seems people went to The Armory Show and to Art Basel Hong Kong and then home.” Even so, whilst some galleries were still struggling to make their first sales, others were pulling off sales to institutions. Benut’s Agial Gallery

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Virtural Exhibition

SHARJAH – The Barjeel Art Foundation, in collaboration with the Google Cultural Institute, presents Art Project And Archive, an exhibition featuring over 430 works from the collection by artists such as Marwan Kassab-Bachi, Dia Al-Azzawia and Yto Barrada, among others. Visit www.google.com/culturalinstitute

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(M10) sold a Shafic Abboud work to Mashreq Private Bank for between AED 70,000–90,000, whileLatitude 28 (J19) sold two pieces by Dilip Chobisa, one to an institution in North America and the other to a Riyadh-based collector. Meanwhile, Carbon 12 (A23) sold a Sara Rahbar work, Holding On to Nothing But You, to the Davis Museum in the USA for between $20,000–50,000, and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde (J18) sold Keys (1955) by Mohammed Kazem for $10,000 to an institution in the UAE.

Elsewhere, a regional collector relieved Pi Artworks (A43) of a large Gulay Semercigil work for between AED 50,000–60,000. Green Art Gallery (A26) sold a Kamroz Aram work for $40,000, and Rodolphe Janssen (A20) had two notable sales: a Walead Beshty transparency for $25,000–30,000 and an untitled Gert & Uwe Tobias work for $32,000–37,000.

Pechersky Gallery (A10) were delighted to sell an untitled work by Rachel Lee Hovnanian to a member of the UAE royal family for AED 35,000, while Khashya Hildebrand (A32) built on its opening day success with the sale of The Funeral by Marvarn Salarmarani for AED 28,000 to a local collector new to the gallery. Albareh Art Gallery (J26) sold a piece by Zuhair Al-Saeed to a regional collector for AED 15,000, while Leila Heller Gallery (J23) sold a Noor Ali Chagani work for AED 10,000 to a British collector, with MA2 Gallery (A7) selling Ken Matsubara’s The Sleeping Water Storm In A Glass for AED 10,000.

Galleria Franco Noero (A12) reported holding two works on reserve. Selma Feriani (A18) had several sales, including three Pascal Hachem works for $4500–7000 and Yazid Oulab’s Clou for $15,000. Canvas Gallery (B9) sold Ayaz Jokhi’s Marilyn Monroe for $8500, while Nathalie Obadia (J21) sold a work by Ricardo Brey to a Dubai-based collector for $6500. Grosvenor Gallery (A27) sold a work by Faiza Butt for $6000, with Agial Gallery (A42) selling several drawings by Heba Kalache for $3000 each to Lebanese, Egyptian and Emirati collectors. Victoria Miro (A33) sold three works by Idris Khan for undisclosed prices. Among the Moderns, Lisbon’s Perve Galéna (M4) sold several works in the $8000–10,000 range, including by Ernesto Shikhani and Manuel Figuinea, with Loft Art Gallery (M15) selling three Mohammed Melehi pieces.

ERRATUM

In Issue 1, Canvas Daily mistakenly reported that Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde (J18) sold a work by Rokni Haerizadeh for $130,000. The work is a collaboration between Rokni, Ramin Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian. Also, in One On One with Abdellahsen Alserkal on page 8, the date of Ayam’s opening in Alserkal Avenue is 2008.

THE ROAR/MEOW PARADOX

Shauna Richardson’s ‘crochetdermy’ is at Design Days Dubai.

She is the small woman hovering near the life-sized taxidermy lion perching on a plinth. Its energy impels ferocity with realistic bared teeth, but on closer inspection, it becomes apparent that this lion is a knit skin-sack made of mohair. No cuddly toy—Shauna Richardson intentionally avoids two characteristics in what intrinsically should be so by avoiding pattern, focusing on linear patterning and attacking realism as far as her crochet-needle and wire frame work will take her. Popular in its unorthodoxy, Richardson’s ‘crochetdermy’ has limits – ‘I’ve said no to a hare with a veil on it.’

While a shocking discovery in Design Days Dubai, a space filled with all that glitters (but not necessarily gold), Richardson’s design at the Crafts Council booth is a palette-cleaner: kitsch but realistic and unapologetically out of place. “When you look at accessible things like animals, it makes people uncomfortable to accept it as contemporary, but that is why I use subjects like that, to be accessible,” she says. However, a work that is willing to embrace itself on the merits of its own values? About as contemporary as it gets. But unlike the unfathomable non-boundsaries of contemporary creations, Richardson’s ‘crochetdermy’ has limits – “I’ve said no to a hare with a veil on it.”

IN THE CANVAS MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

Lebanese artist, poet and writer Etel Adnan’s witty text about light and enlightenment graces the cover of Canvas’s March/April issue.

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CHRISTIE’S DUBAI AUCTION

The top four lots from the Christie’s Modern and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art, which was held last night.

Bestselling lot on the right was Tahia Halim Farhat Al-Nuba (The Happiness Of Nubia), which went under the hammer for $749,000 against its high estimate of $350,000. New York’s Guggenheim opened a show for the celebrated Iranian artist on 13 March, curated by Suzanne Cotter, who presented a show for the conceptual. Further indicative of the SIKKA expansion, repercussions of presentation can turn the for-granted into private,” says Hattar, of the work that indicates that the Internet in their respective institutions. “In this era, everyone is trying to digitise whatever they have for fear that these things might get lost. In the context of Palestine, maybe destroyed. A lot of these institutions are doing that, or trying to, or looking for solutions. What is so ridiculous is that each and every one is trying to do it on their own, an island on their own. Trying to create the wheel,” said Perskan.

Third highest selling lot was Abdurahman Gharem’s Hemisphere, which also sold well above its high estimate, at $400,000 against $180,000.

Ayman Baalbaki’s Babel also sold for a world record price for the artist at auction, going for $485,000 against its high estimate of $200,000.

In the Al-Fahidi historical neighbourhood of Dubai, mixed media artist Jalal Luqman curates, with the support of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, a platform of commissioned works from 4B artists with multidisciplinary approaches.

One artist, Hazem Mahdy, has taken the opportunity of the environment SIKKA provides to expand upon his usually photographic practice, saying, “My piece is called Hic, a Turkish word for void or nothingness. It is a plastic 3D print of interconnected arms in an upwards spiralling motion in a room covered in black trash bags to absorb the light so the piece fills the space with its shadows. It invites the viewer to become part of this mystical experience of whirling in nothingness as the Sufis of Turkey do.”

SIKKA is an environment that pushes artistic and curatorial independence and some experimentation. For example, Wael Hattar presents A Heaven For Sale, a black-walled enclosure with peep-holes and ‘for sale’ signs both at the location and online. “It’s a tongue-in-cheek look at making the public private,” says Hattar, of the work that indicates that the repercussions of presentation can turn the for-granted into the conceptual. Further indicative of the SIKKA expansion, Mobius Design Studio overtakes and commissions a work for the conceptual. While the digital age and pop culture, lamenting before his talk was cut short due to time constraints, how “Off the record, it may be a Greenbergian view, but art should be experienced.”

SIKKA at 5

SIKKA 2015 marks the fifth edition of the artist-led satellite fair for emerging UAE-born or based talent, occurring in tandem with Dubai Art Week.


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GLOBAL ART FORUM 9

18 MARCH

Shumon Basar opened the first day of the Global Art Forum: Download Update? at Art Dubai with, “We are promiscuous in our interests. Art, either contemporary or otherwise, is not given VIP treatment in the Global Art Forum. Curiosity, unlike fossil fuels or polar bear is, we believe inexhaustible.”

Architecture Effects: Moving On After Progress saw Troy Conrad musing on new frontiers, the digital age and pop culture, lamenting before his talk was cut short due to time constraints, how “Off the record, it may be a Greenbergian view, but art should be experienced.”

Too Long. Didn’t Read involved Christopher Bevans in conversation with Turi Munthe – who, following the fashion-based discussion, noted, “You just re-spelled ‘textiles’ as tech-styles!”

All images courtesy Art Dubai.
The Syrian-born artist explores the corporeal and psychological effects of solitude and longing, a notion continued in his Dream series. This painting (price undisclosed) incorporates Cubist elements in its monochromatic variance. Alluding to “death and hope simultaneously”, Dahoul merges the back- and foregrounds into indefinite planes both on and off canvas, as well as figurative confrontation and isolation from the contradictory yet void body language of the fragile subject.

The depth and sustainability of the Modern Middle Eastern art market. Still young, this market covers a wide geographical area and there are still new names being introduced all the time, as demonstrated in the March sale with the likes of Ramies Younan, Kameel El-Telmissany and Marguerite Nakhi. Furthermore, the Contemporary of today will become the Modern of tomorrow, which will further broaden the supply chain. Whilst there may be periods where the quality of works can vary depending on availability, overall the supply chain of Modern Middle Eastern art remains extremely strong.

SHIVA BALAGHI, CULTURAL HISTORIAN, BROWN UNIVERSITY
In the summer of 2000, I went to Andrea Rosen Gallery with my dear friend Anthony Shadid (the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who died tragically in Syria). We looked at Abbas Kiarostami’s first-ever US photography exhibit in preparation for our interview with the master. As we left the gallery and walked through Chelsea’s streets, Anthony spoke of how much he wanted to purchase some of the works. They were relatively affordable, but still too expensive for us. At the time, he was an AP reporter and I was an NYU professor. So we joked that we should get a credit card, buy a few of the photographs and consider it an investment. The joke was on us, because it actually would have been an incredibly sound investment. The joke was on us, because it actually would have been an incredibly sound financial investment! Those photographs now fetch amazing prices at auction.

WET SAND
In muted tones, five artists explore the particular solitude that remains at the beach when the sun sets and only damp sand remains.


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“Beirut,” says Antar, “is a city where monuments cannot thrive. […] What it leaves you with is a thought; an idea of a city, its vibrancy, its intricacies.” He photographs his native Lebanon from above, part of a photographic books series/book collaboration with architect Youssef Tohme. Exploring Beirut’s architecture, where one sees only a faint outline in the distance, the image ($12,000) invites the viewer to come closer to the slightly pink tones to attempt visual clarity and fill in the blanks independently.


Syrian-born photographer Jaber Al-Azmeh presents an unnamed photograph (priced between $3000–5000) that depicts an equally anonymous environment in Qatar in greyed-out tones. Interrupted only by the residual traces of vehicles that fade out towards the sea, is it reminiscent or ominous? “Where are we now? What paths did our dreams take? Are we lost, or going in vicious circles?” Al-Azmeh’s practice would indicate that a heavy bleakness resides in the still displacement of the shots captured.


Indian-born Nikhil Chopra’s practice revolves as much around drawing and painting as the performative act of doing so. Using this drawing ($7500) to indicate his relationship to drawing and painting, it is a vehicle of rehearsal towards site-specific performances. The improvisation of live drawing can be seen in the delicately gestural qualities of his monochromatic scenes capture everyday elements such as waterscapes.


The Portuguese painter takes the concretely banal and gives it a nostalgic effervescence by using oil on transparent Plexiglas. Using textural brushstrokes that contradict the flatness of the painted planes, Cortesao ventures into new visual separations with this quadrtych (priced between $26,000–32,000). While tonally uplifting, the dulled quality of the vibrant hues and performative concretely banal and gives it a nostalgic effervescence by using oil on transparent Plexiglas. Using textural brushstrokes that contradict the flatness of the painted planes, Cortesao ventures into new visual separations with this quadrtych (priced between $26,000–32,000). While tonally uplifting, the dulled quality of the vibrant hues and performative