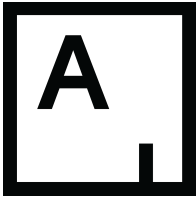




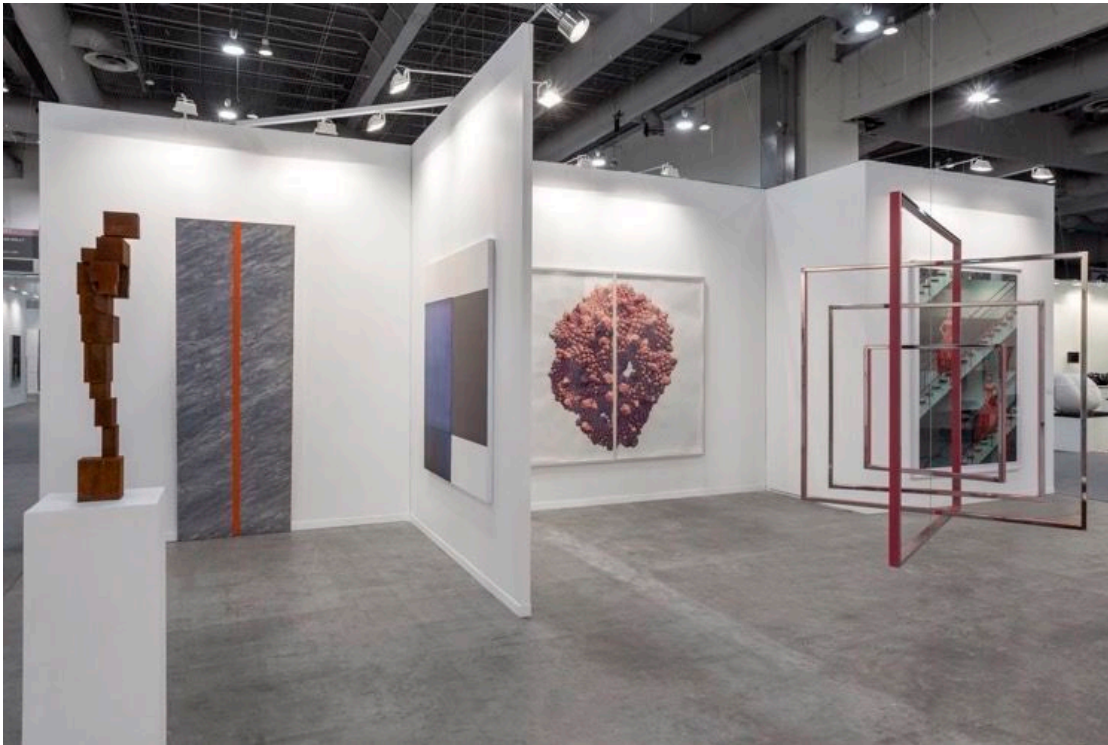
Anna Louie Sussman, "What Sold at Zona Maco," *Artsy*, February 11, 2018



Art Market

What Sold at Zona Maco

Anna Louie Sussman Feb 11, 2018 12:25 pm



Installation view Sean Kelly Gallery's booth at ZsONA MACO, 2018.

Courtesy of Sean Kelly Gallery. Photo by Sebastiano Pellion di Persano.

There's no question that the hundreds of collectors, dealers, and museum types who descended on Mexico City this week for a trio of art fairs have a terrific time enjoying the



city's world-class museums and restaurants. Whether they, alongside Mexican and regional collectors, can sustain the growth that the country's art market has experienced in recent years, is up for debate.

ZONAMACO (commonly written as Zona Maco), now in its 15th year, opened Wednesday afternoon with 170 dealers participating from 27 countries. But the atmosphere, even on opening night, was subdued, and many international dealers said sales were slow to nonexistent over the first few days of the fair, although some who had attended the fair in prior years said Mexican collectors tend to close over the weekend. On Thursday at the two satellite fairs, Material and Salón Acme, the enthusiasm and goodwill were palpable, even if sales weren't necessarily through the roof.

Explanations varied as to why sales were slow at Zona Maco. Some cited politics, with Mexico's upcoming elections this summer a cause for uncertainty, or the potential renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which could have a significant impact on Mexico's economic relations with the United States. Others wondered whether the economic aftershocks of last September's earthquake, which hit Mexico City during Zona Maco's sister fair, Salón del Anticuario, and led to the cancellation of the city's gallery weekend, were still being felt. Others said it was simply down to the fact that Mexican collectors like to take their time.

According to dealers, all of the fairs this week appeared to draw a growing number of international collectors, for whom Mexico City is an ever-more-tempting stop on the art circuit, especially in the thick of winter in North America and Europe. (Guadalajara, too, was reportedly bustling with international visitors the weekend before the fairs.) The city, which boasts a number of extraordinary museums and a strong set of galleries, art spaces such as [Lulu](#) and Biquini Wax EPS, and working artists, has also become a destination for museum groups.



“This is an opportunity to come down to Mexico City, have great food and drink some tequila, do some studio visits and visit beautiful museums,” said Alex Logsdail, director of [Lisson Gallery](#). “I think it’s kind of a logical escape for a lot of people.”

The gallery sold multiple works from the fair preview, including an Anish Kapoor mirror work that had an asking price of £525,000. In addition to works by recognizable names like Tony Cragg and Daniel Buren, Logsdail brought artists who were new to the Mexican market, such as Stanley Whitney and Leon Polk Smith. He noted that the fair serves an important role for them in maintaining long-term relationships with collectors the gallery works with here, even though, he said, “they may or may not buy at the fair.”

At David Zwirner, early sales were also spotty, but director Veronique Ansorge said this was typical for Zona Maco.

“It’s not a fair where all the action is on the first day,” she said. Two works by Wolfgang Tillmans sold early: *Easter* (2012) for \$100,000 and *unlikely match* (2017), for \$35,000. A Josh Smith painting, *The Whole Point* (2017) and *Sensual Power* (2017), each for \$75,000, also sold in the next few days. Ansorge said she had seen a few Brazilian and Colombian collectors at the fair, as well as West Coast U.S. collectors and a lot of art advisors.

Lauren Kelly, a director at New York’s Sean Kelly Gallery, was comfortable with the plodding sales pace, especially since Sean Kelly Gallery works with a number of Latin American artists and Conceptual artists, both of which are readily understood and appreciated by Mexican collectors, she said.

“It’s a much more pleasant experience because it seems like they’re really considering the works and how it fits into their collection, rather than just shopping,” Kelly said. “So while it may be slow at this fair, in the long run, we make a lot of good connections.” She had sold several works by Mexican artist Jose Dávila, currently the subject of a show at one of Mexico City’s premier galleries, Galería OMR. Among them was a larger mobile, *Homage to the*



Square (2016), for \$50,000, with a second, smaller one, on hold, and an Alexander Calder-inspired paper cutout for \$45,000.

At Galerie Lelong & Co.'s booth, several works had sold, all of which were by women. A work by Nancy Spero, Nicaragua (1986), was placed with a U.S. museum, while a small, untitled 2014 painting by Etel Adnan and a new work, Buddens: Drapery and Wattle (2017), by Australian artist and photographer Rosemary Laing were sold to private collectors. "It's always worth your while," said Mary Sabbatino, vice-president and partner at the gallery, even if sales are slow, recalling that one of her "worst fairs ever" financially speaking had led to the appearance of one of her artists, Zilia Sánchez, in the Venice Biennale, because at that fair, a Sánchez work had caught the eye of Centre Pompidou chief curator Christine Macel.

Claire Bergeal, an associate director at Bortolami, said that Zona Maco was fruitful ground for fostering relationships with local institutions. The gallery showed a mini-survey of Chicago-based artist Barbara Kasten, who is in her early 80s, but who many visitors thought was a young artist, a phenomenon Bergeal attributed to the lively colors and vividness of Kasten's prints. By Friday evening, they had sold six out of the fourteen works they brought to the fair, with prices ranging from \$15,000 to \$35,000. Among the sales was Kasten's Architectural Site 7, July 14, 1986 (1986) which went for between \$20,000 and \$30,000. She also highlighted a recent series in which Kasten shoots pieces of fluorescent Plexiglass with exposed film, giving the prints a pinkish cast. Some of the works had gone to Americans and some to local collectors, Bergeal said.

Nikola Cernetic of Turin's Luce Gallery was one of the few international gallerists who had a robust early stretch of sales, with the majority of his solo presentation by New York-based artist Derek Fordjour placed by Friday evening. Perhaps surprisingly, almost none went to Mexican collectors, possibly, Cernetic said, because the issue of race raised in the works (Fordjour's images feature black figures, painted on a collage-like surface of newspaper and cardboard) may not resonate locally. Fordjour's work had been acquired last year by the Dallas Museum of Art from the Dallas Art Fair and he is currently finishing a residency at New York's Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling. Six of the smaller works from



the artist's 2018 "Portrait Player" series sold for \$9,000 each (two from in the booth and four that were not hung in the booth), while two of the larger ones, *Six Count* and *Roll Tide Turn*, sold for \$18,000 each.



Derek Fordjour, *Six Count*, 2018

Luce Gallery

The international dealers who fared well tended to arrive with a number of relationships already in place. "You need some sort of inside track," said Raymond Bulman, director of New York's The Hole, which was participating for the first time at Zona Maco. "The Mexican collectors we knew from New York, they introduced us to a lot of other people here, and that has made it pretty good for us," he said, despite the late arrival of their crate of paintings. For opening night, they had been able to show only one painting, *A Breakthrough at Brunch* (2018) by Alex Gardner, which went within the first hour to a Mexican collector. Bertram, a Pomeranian who frequently travels to fairs with The Hole's owner Kathy Grayson, had, however, made it to Mexico intact and was the picture of nonchalance, splayed out on a table alongside business cards and a small catalog from a recent show.



Since the crate's arrival, they sold two additional works, *En rang d'Onion* (2017) by Julie Curtiss and *BREAKING: Pasadena Man's Brave Response To Waitress' Facebook Post Proves He Is 1000% Not Complicit In Rape Culture! And, 30 Photos of Real Avocado Toast You Will Never Not Believe Haven't Been Photoshopped (Must Be 21+ To View)* (2018) by Morgan Blair. All were around \$10,000 and Bulman said that, as of Saturday, they only had two paintings left for sale.

"We should have brought more!" said Grayson.

"A lot of collectors come [to Mexico City] from Latin America because of the blue-chip galleries, and for me as a gallery it's important to put my artists in that network of the big collectors," he said. Fernández was showing work by artists such as Sam Durant and Allen Ruppersberg, who sell for up to \$60,000, as well as by younger artists whose work goes for around \$6,000.

"The good collectors go and check out the emerging spaces," he said.

Galguera said that was one lovely thing about the Mexican market: As a collector this week, "you find a niche for everything."

"You have the more established fair like Maco, where you have all the famous international galleries coming in, then you have, economically speaking, the mid-level fair, Material, which has some fantastic projects, and then you have Acme, geared toward emerging artists," he said. "In terms of economics, I think there's a target for everything."