

Artlyst | 2 March, 2014

'Art14 Stakes Out Its Territory Somewhere Between Frieze and London Art Fair'

By Ben Austin

<http://www.artlyst.com/articles/art14-stakes-out-its-territory-somewhere-between-frieze-and-london-art-fair>

## ART REVIEW

---

*Art14, Frieze, London Art Fair*



### Art14 Stakes Out Its Territory Somewhere Between Frieze and London Art Fair

**I don't really know where to start in terms of a review of Art14, as it seemed to me like it was the 'best of fairs and the worst of fairs'. In part it was cluttered and confusing, with no apparent thread and overriding feel. By the entrance one found high-end galleries of note, sitting uneasily next to Asian art of dubious quality (doe eyed girls and sub-photorealism in the main).**

As you moved your way down, however, there were works and galleries that grabbed one's attention and other things that were just plain 'bad art'. Art14 seemingly had little curatorial input into the stands themselves, the outcome was a mishmash of galleries, dotted about, some with 'Urban Pop art' intermixed with some serious work of quality. Perhaps in order to fill the vast hall, the fair directors allowed galleries with the means to stump up a booth price rather than the careful curation expected of leading international art fairs. This certainly isn't Frieze or Basel, nor even is it the well established and well meaning London Art Fair, Art14 tries to be something for everyone and ultimately it fails in having the kind of consistency necessary to say something different.

Do not get me wrong there was some fantastic work to be found here, but one had to seek it out. The noise of mediocrity meant that the good galleries had a tough time being heard.



I am perhaps being somewhat uncharitable and there is much to commend, the whole art fair experience, such as the sculptural installations and in particular Yinka Shonibare 'Cannonball Heaven' at the entrance, (Photo above) Romuald Hazoume's 'Rat Singer: Second Only to God', Steven Maciver's 'Nexus' and Zhao Zhao's 'Waterfall'. (Bottom Photo) These were great additions and in fact were probably the best thing about the fair.



To focus on the positive, the stand out galleries were as follows, with key artist(s) in brackets: Pearl Lam, The Fine Art Society (Rob and Nick Carter and Annie Kevans), Beers Contemporary (Catalin Geana), Jack Bell (Cameron Platter, Aboudia Photo above), Robin Katz Fine Art (Keith Coventry and Colin Jones) Mummery & Schnelle (Paul Caffell), Rooke & Van Wyk (Lakin Ogunbanwo), Alon Segev Gallery (Gideon Rubin), Vigo (Leonardo Drew and Nika Neelova) and Paul Stolper (Joana Vasconcelos) Choi & Lager Gallery Koln and Triumph Gallery Moscow exhibited a 'Church of South Park' installation with a monolithic Facebook cross, at the centre by Andrey Blokhin and Georgy Kuznetsov . (Photo below)



The Emerge section also had a few strong galleries, namely Bearspace (Suzanne Moxhay), Edel Assanti (Gordon Cheung), Fold Gallery (Simon Callery), Hada Contemporary (Chung Heeseung) and Gallery Nosco (Lauren Seiden & Tulio Pinto).



It was whilst I was at Gallery Nosco that I bumped into the art critic Paul Carey-Kent, whose opinion I greatly respect, when I asked him what his choice work was in the fair, he cited Piers Secunda's (above) sculptural painting 'Chinese Mountain' which was on show at Uptown Gallery.

Overall Art14 is a welcome addition to the London art scene. Now in its second year, but to my mind the fair needs to be more rigorous in the selection process, due to the backers it is very heavy on the Asian market (Pearl Lam, being the best of that lot). The installation work was enjoyable and the huge hall allows for these pieces to breathe.

In terms of sales, as ever I'm sure that there are winners and losers. I can only imagine the costs of bringing all that work over from the Far East.

Hopefully Art14 will evolve and develop a more unifying theme, or even have dedicated sections to the Asian galleries and/or Urban/Neo-Pop art. It seems to be a trend that regional galleries have their own fair, as there is a new art fair during Frieze week devoted to African art and in Miami during Basel there is a fair for Latin American art. This seems to work otherwise you end up with a bit of a mixed bag and conflicting cultural voices.

To end on a positive note, Art14 is a young fair held at a relatively quiet time for the European international fairs calendar. It was buzzing with people including just about every important London collector, under the sun. This fair seemed popular and will find the correct balance of galleries through natural selection, dictated by the weak galleries not returning. I have every faith that this fair will continue for many years to come.

Next week I am off to New York to cover The Armory Show and related satellite fairs.