



THE ART NEWSPAPER

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Next Stop Randall's Island for Grooms's 'Ole Gal'

By Nancy Kenney

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INSIDE
Pull-out poster
New work by Jonathan
Lyndon Chase p10-11



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Frieze New York: 1-2 May 2019

Why advance sales are the new normal

In the internet age, pre-selling at fairs is gaining ground but collectors are unlikely to stop buying in person any time soon

A week before the first VIP set foot inside the Frieze tent on Wednesday, Toby Clarke, the director of London's Vigo Gallery, had sold his entire booth of paintings by the hot Brooklyn artist Derrick Adams. Priced between \$10,000 and \$50,000, all ten works on paper, part of Adams's *Beauty World* series, were snapped up by Clarke's top collectors, including the philanthropist Beth Rudin DeWoody. "All works were sold off the back of conversations, without sending any emails. Demand for Derrick's work is huge," Clarke says.

Selling art based on a jpeg is as old as smart phones, but advance sales have historically been unpopular among fair organisers, due to concerns that collectors will be put off from attending in person or that the fair-going experience will be devalued for those who do. Clarke says that such early selling is rare for his gallery, and he prefers to use fairs as a place to meet new collectors. But, in an increasingly crowded and costly fair landscape, coupled with expanding online markets, pre-selling is becoming ever more prevalent. As Frieze's director Victoria Siddall acknowledges:

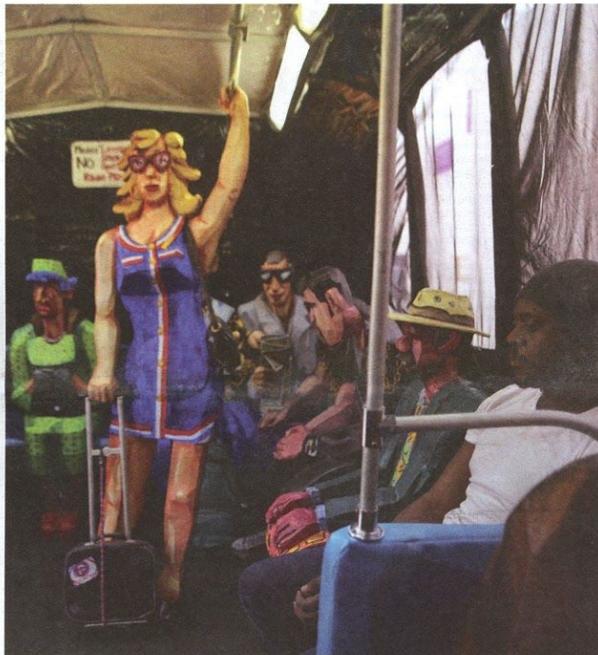
"Art fairs are platforms that enable galleries to sell art—we expect that to extend before and after the fair and we want galleries to derive as much value from our fairs as possible."

Patricia Hanna, who manages the collection of the Miami-based property tycoon Jorge Pérez, says she both reserves and closes deals on works before a fair. "It's about 50/50," she estimates, adding: "Not all purchases are pre-meditated."

The Pérez collection bought a Hank Willis Thomas neon piece before Art Basel in Miami Beach opened last year. "In that instance, we knew we wanted the piece, and a neon is a neon," Hanna says. "But for the most expensive or historically significant pieces, or those where scale or condition is a consideration, we would usually want to see the work in person."

Thaddeus Ropac, who has galleries in London, Paris and Salzburg, says it would be "irresponsible" for dealers to not do their homework. "We wouldn't expect someone to wander over to the booth and acquire something on the spot. We are constantly working to place our artists in the best possible collections," he says. Museum acquisitions can be a lengthy

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NEXT STOP RANDALL'S ISLAND FOR GROOMS'S 'OLE GAL'

THE BUS, RED GROOMS'S rollicking soft sculpture from 1995, has pulled up at Marlborough Gallery's booth in Frieze New York's Spotlight section, with visitors invited to climb aboard. "I made up the bus riders by letting my pencil just start with a nose or an eye and doodle on from there," Grooms recalls, adding: "It was important for me to get the look of a mid-90s bus so it could eventually become a quaint 'Ole Gal.' This far into the 21st century, I guess she has." The piece is on offer for \$550,000. *N.K.*

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