



Art Market

The Best Booths and Standout Sales at Art SG in Singapore

Payal Uttam

Jan 14, 2023 2:17AM



Installation view of Axel Vervoordt Gallery's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

The air was thick with anticipation as the much-delayed [Art SG](#) fair finally swung open its doors in Singapore on Wednesday. Collectors, curators, and dealers from across the globe streamed into the city's iconic Marina Bay Sands convention center eager to comb through works from more than 160 local and international galleries.

"This has been four years in the making," said Mathieu Borysevicz, founder of the Shanghai gallery BANK, which signed up as an exhibitor in 2018 when the fair was first announced. "Initially, we were a little hesitant about Singapore because it's not the most dynamic city in terms of culture, and we don't have many collectors here, but all that seems to have shifted...Yesterday was explosive."

A strong contingent of collectors from neighboring Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand flew in for the event, as well as buyers from Australia, mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Europe. Having recently gathered at Frieze Seoul, many collectors saw Art SG—which is organized by international fair conglomerate The Art Assembly—as a complementary and exciting destination for contemporary art in Asia.



David Nash, installation view in Annely Juda Fine Art's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Annely Juda Fine Art.

Recently, Singapore has been championed as Asia's next major art hub, with many seeing Art SG as a catalyst for the local and regional art market. In the last few months, activity by auction houses such as Sotheby's (which in 2022 staged its first auction in Singapore after 15 years) and the appointment of Singapore-based representatives of international galleries has been touted as signs of the city's burgeoning importance in the global art market. The influx of wealth from affluent collectors in Singapore has also been seen as a promising development: In the first six months of 2022, the median expenditure of Singapore collectors was \$164,000, surpassing the entire year of 2021 at \$129,000, according to the Art Basel and UBS Survey of Global Collecting.

But while many are optimistic about the city-state's potential, others are taking a guarded approach. "We heard these exact same speeches about Singapore's potential 10 years ago and it never came to fruition," said Belgian collector Alain Servais, who was also in town to visit the Singapore Biennale, which ends in March. "It's too early to tell. The fair has a shot at it but whether the market will follow, we will have to wait and see."

Many dealers from international galleries told Artsy that they are participating in the fair to test the waters. While some reported a slow start to the fair, several gallerists saw strong interest from local and Southeast Asian collectors. Within 10 minutes of the fair opening, New York-based Sundaram Tagore Gallery, which has an outpost in Singapore's Gillman Barracks art district, sold two works by Korean artist Chun Kwang Young to a Singapore-based buyer priced at \$184,000 and \$197,000 and a large-scale painting by Singaporean artist Jane Lee to a local collector.



Katherine Bernhardt
Ashwagandha, 2022
David Zwirner
Price on request

David Zwirner also placed many works with Southeast Asian clients early in the fair, selling more than half of its booth, including two large-scale paintings by Katherine Bernhardt, as well as works by Neo Rauch, Carol Bove, and others with a value totaling more than \$2.5 million. Other blue-chip galleries such as White Cube made several sales including an Anselm Kiefer canvas, *Dein Goldenes Haar Margarete* (1981), for €1.2 million (\$1.3 million) to an Indonesian buyer.

Pace Gallery sold several works to international collectors, including a mesmerizing James Turrell installation for \$950,000, and Lehmann Maupin sold four new works by Malaysian-born, London-based artist Mandy El-Sayegh for a combined total of \$335,000 to different collectors from Singapore and Southeast Asia. Gagosian placed two works by late American artist Ashley Bickerton with Museum MACAN in the artist's adopted homeland of Indonesia. Although six-figure sales on opening day were limited, galleries are pleased thus far with the turnout and the appetite of established regional collectors as well as younger local buyers.

Below are six of Art SG's best booths, which will be on view until Sunday, January 15th.

Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Booth BC04

With works by Otto Boll, Chung Chang Sup, Raimund Girke, Norio Imai, Kimsooja, Jaffa Lam, Tsuyoshi Maekawa, Yuko Nasaka, Renato Nicolodi, Kazuo Shiraga, Bosco Sodi, and Jef Verheyen



Installation view of Axel Vervoordt Gallery's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Dramatic sculptural works by avant-garde Japanese Gutai artists alongside contemporary names from Hong Kong, Korea, and Mexico dominate this booth from Belgium's [Axel Vervoordt Gallery](#). Among the most striking is Japanese artist [Tsuyoshi Maekawa](#)'s expressive canvases wrapped in slashed, creased, and twisted burlap, and Korean artist [Kimsooja](#)'s Bottari sculpture—a parrot green bundle of used Korean bedcovers and clothes.



[Axel Vervoordt Gallery](#)¹¹
[View Slideshow](#)



Another highlight is Hong Kong artist [Jaffa Lam](#)'s *Hybrid Peace* (2022). Working with female workers who were laid off from local garment factories, Lam transformed fragments of recycled umbrella fabric into a patchwork flag that reflects on ideas of identity, memory, and the fraught collective history of her hometown.

Shrine Empire Gallery.

Booth FC09

With works by Baaraan Ijlal and Moonis Ijlal



Installation view of Shrine Empire Gallery's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Shrine Empire Gallery.

This jewel box of a booth from New Delhi's Shrine Empire Gallery is filled with powerful miniature paintings set in evocative wooden frames. Self-taught Indian artist [Baaraan Ijlal](#) and her historian brother Moonis Ijlal have been working on the series "Hostile Witness" (2021) for close to 10 years.

Traveling to old neighborhoods in Bhopal, Mumbai, Lucknow, Kolkata, and Banaras in India, the Ijlal's spoke to individuals including marginalized sex workers and Dalits (a caste of people once known as "untouchables") and recorded accounts of personal and collective loss. Painting directly onto photographs of historic architectural sites, she brings to life harrowing testimonies of ordinary individuals.



Shrine Empire ⁶
[View Slideshow](#)



Baaraan creates a fantastical universe populated with fictional characters, including a winged crow woman who is meant to be a restorer of order and a gun-headed tyrant symbolizing those who abuse power. The lyrical wooden frames made by Moonis include elements like boats and animals which amplify the paintings' narratives.

Ink Studio

BB02

With works by Bingyi, Zheng Chongbin, Li Huasheng, Li Jin, Peng Kanglong, Su Huang-Sheng, Hung Fai, and Wai Pong-yu



Installation view of Ink Studio's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Ink Studio.

This booth from Beijing- and New York-based gallery [Ink Studio](#) celebrates a group of eight fiercely creative contemporary ink painters. Chinese artist [Bingyi](#)'s sublime abstract ink paintings shown on the exterior of the booth are not to be missed. In a similar tradition to land artists of the 1960s and '70s, she created these works in the Taihang Mountains in China, flinging ink and water onto paper and collaborating with the topography of the site as well as weather and gravity to yield unexpected results.



[Ink Studio](#)¹⁰
[View Slideshow](#)



Around the corner hangs a monumental collage work, *Revealing Shadows from the Formless* 无体显影 (2019), by veteran San Francisco-based painter [Zheng Chongbin](#). Composed of soft Xuan paper collaged onto aluminum frames, it is made using an unusual combination of white acrylic paint and ink. Abandoning expressive brushstrokes, he allows the materials to dictate the work, forming spontaneous rivulets and pools that culminate in a painting suffused with movement and drama.

BANK

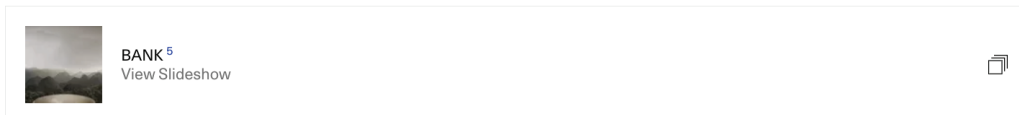
Booth 1C03

With works by Busui Ajaw, Xu Bing, Ching Ho Cheng, Michael Lin, Lin Ke, Michael Najjar, Tawatchai Puntusawasdi, Tang Song, and Sun Yitian



Installation view of BANK's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of BANK.

Chiang Mai-based artist Tawatchai Puntusawasdi's *Haumea* (2016) is the cornerstone of this thoughtfully curated exhibition from Shanghai gallery BANK. The monumental egg-shaped sculpture, made of riveted aluminum plates, depicts a rendering of the shadow of the earth on the moon. Made using complex mathematical calculations and diagrams — seen in an adjacent, blueprint-like drawing — the work appears at once ancient and futuristic.



The otherworldly sculpture forms a natural dialogue with the nearby photograph *f.a.s.t.* (2017) by German photographer Michael Najjar, which pictures the world's largest radio telescope in China, a spherical metal structure spanning 500 meters that was built to detect extraterrestrial signals. Bordering on the surreal, the work shows the mammoth curved technical instrument nestled in a remote valley, seamlessly combined with a smattering of starlike specks at the top of the work, distant galaxies photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope.

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

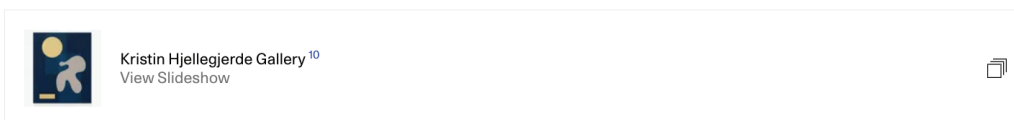
Booth FC03

With works by Sinta Tantra



Sinta Tantra, installation view in Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery.

This blue-carpeted solo presentation from the international [Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery](#) is an oasis of calm amid busy booths packed with a cacophony of works. While Balinese British artist [Sinta Tantra](#) is better known for her exuberant palette often filled with colors like shocking pinks, lush greens, and sharp yellows, these canvases from 2022 are filled with quiet expanses of Prussian blue accented with moonlike gold circles.



Tantra's elegant series of geometric paintings were inspired by an intimate moonlit scene in the musical *The King and I*, based on the 1944 novel *Anna and the King of Siam*. Tantra describes her process as meditative, something which is rooted in her Balinese background, and says that creating a sense of balance in the compositions was key.

Annely Juda Fine Art

Booth BC05

With works by Anthony Caro, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Katsura Funakoshi, Naum Gabo, Alan Green, David Hockney, Leon Kossof, Kasimir Malevich, David Nash, Suzanne Treister, Theo van Doesburg, and François Morellet



Installation view of Annely Juda Fine Art's booth at Art SG, 2023. Courtesy of Annely Juda Fine Art.

London gallery [Annely Juda Fine Art](#) has mounted a striking presentation of works by British sculptor [David Nash](#) on the exterior of its booth. Working closely with nature, Nash uses trees that have fallen naturally, have been felled for safety purposes, or cut due to disease. His organic sculptures span from sharp-edged velvet black charred oak works perched on a matching black shelf to a precariously sliced redwood sculpture evoking intricate natural rock formations.



[Annely Juda Fine Art](#)®
View Slideshow



Meanwhile, inside the booth, detailed [David Hockney](#) drawings are juxtaposed against a hulking, rusted steel [Anthony Caro](#) sculpture *Three Up (B2714)* (2009–10) and a dangling white neon light installation, *Gesticulation No.15* (2015), by French artist [François Morellet](#). ■

Payal Uttam