



THE ART NEWSPAPER

The Dallas Art Fair returns to a rapidly transforming Texas

The boutique Southern fair has a strong showing this year of international galleries while maintaining its reputation for fostering homegrown talent

Daniel Cassady
21 April 2022



The Dallas skyline
Photo by Carol M. Highsmith via Wikimedia Commons

The American South can be a strange place. Insular yet inviting. Parochial and worldly at once. It can seem difficult for newcomers to break into the cliques and social clubs, when often all it takes is the confidence to introduce oneself. And that confidence pays outsized dividends. Community ties are what holds the South together, and the Dallas Art Fair, which is returning to its longtime home at the Fashion Industry Gallery from 21-24 April for its 14th edition, is no different.

The fair holds a unique spot in the art world ecosystem. It is proudly homegrown while decidedly international. There will be exhibitors with large footprints, like Kasmin, Perrotin and Marlborough. And lively upstarts like Various Small Fires, which recently opened up shop in Dallas, marking the gallery's third location (the other two are in Los Angeles and Seoul). There are galleries from Mexico City, Madrid, Berlin, Dubai and Milan. There are galleries from across the Southern US, from North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, and of course a strong showing of Texas art scene fixtures, which make up close to 20% of the exhibitors, many of which have seen their reputations grow with the fair.

“We’ve always fostered these younger galleries and helped them grow,” fair director Kelly Cornell says. “We’ve had a lot of galleries that started with small booths, and as their presence has grown and their programmes grow, they’re also investing in a larger way in the Dallas Art Fair and this year taking our largest booths. And intertwining with our community of collectors.”



A selection from the Dallas art fair from Ulterior Gallery. Minoru Yoshida, Untitled (around 1965)
Courtesy Ulterior Gallery

Another factor that sets the fair apart is the collector base. Texas has always been home to well-heeled collectors with deep roots in the oil and energy industries, but the state has seen massive growth in the last decade. Among US cities, Dallas saw the biggest growth in population from 2020 to 2021 with more than 97,000 people added to the population, and three of the top five US cities for growth during that period were in east Texas. That is not all all surprising when one considers how affordable living in Texas can be relative to the state’s more cosmopolitan neighbors on the East and West coasts and its recent warming up to the technology industry, which has been coaxing Californians to make the move south at a staggering rate. According to the *San Antonio Business Journal*, 42% of domestic migration to Texas comes from California, and companies like Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Samsung and Charles Schwab have elected to move headquarters or build new plants in Texas, citing the business-friendly climate.

For those who have recently moved to the state, or those visiting for the first time, the Dallas Art Fair is an ideal place to make those connections that grow into friendships and relationships. Both the city and the art scene thrive on community, and welcoming newcomers is a point of pride. “Art fairs are great for the city,” Cornell says, “and the industry. It’s a great coming together of ideas and at the points where those ideas converge, amazing things can happen, whether it’s a museum show, a gallery finding a new artist or a collector falling in love with a new work.”

There are plenty of opportunities for these “convergence points”. The fair is famous for collectors opening their homes for tours and there are a number of events that will bring locals and visitors together. One notable example is a performance by artist Xxavier Edward Carter in which he re-imagines the myth of Sisyphus by moving the remains of a broken rock to higher ground one push at a time, physically reassembling broken pieces. There will also be a panel discussion hosted at the Nasher Sculpture Center on the growth of the arts and the art market in Dallas titled "The Roaring 20s: Growth of Arts in Dallas".

○ *Dallas Art Fair 2022, 21-24 April, Fashion Industry Gallery, Dallas.*