

DALLAS ART FAIR DIRECTOR KELLY CORNELL ON THE EVOLUTION OF TEXAS' PREMIER ART FAIR

by Ann Binlot



Dallas Art Fair director Kelly Cornell
COURTESY OF DALLAS ART FAIR

The Dallas Art Fair opens to the public on Friday, April 12, after a glamorous benefit preview on April 11. This year's edition will take place at the Fashion Industry Gallery (f.i.g.) in the Dallas Arts District through April 14. The Dallas Museum of Art also announced this morning the names of the artists whose works it will acquire as part of its \$150,000 Dallas Art Fair acquisition fund: Sheila Hicks, Don Dudley, Arcmanoro Niles, Samuel Levi Jones, Nobutaka Aozaki, Emmanuel Van der Auwera, Maja Ruznic, and Dike Blair. Nearly 100 exhibitors from over 30 different cities across the globe will take part in the fair, including Carbon 12 (Dubai), Altman Siegel (San Francisco), Erin Cluley Gallery (Dallas), and Ghebaly Gallery (Los Angeles), will join newcomers Sadie Coles HQ (London), Lisson Gallery (London, New York), and Blain|Southern (London, Berlin). I quizzed Dallas Art Fair director Kelly Cornell about the 2019 edition of the Dallas Art Fair, its new year round exhibition space 214 Projects, and how it has evolved since she since she climbed the ranks as an assistant.

You started out as an assistant with the Dallas Art Fair. What has it been like to climb your way to the top?

I've grown with the fair. When I started it was a small team—and we still are a small team—but what we do year on year has grown vastly. I'm immensely proud of how we've grown alongside Dallas' art scene. It feels organic and homegrown.

How has the Dallas Art Fair evolved?

Overnight! No, it's been more than ten years of building trust with Dallas and the rest of the art world. We're lucky enough to have the support of a great community of collectors and institutions. Once the world found out about Dallas, we've had international support as well. The introduction of our Dallas Art Fair Foundation Acquisition Program in 2016 was a huge coup for us and the Dallas Museum of Art. We've raised \$450,000 for the museum's permanent collection to date. Last month, we opened our own exhibition space in the Design District. It's a bold new chapter we're about to enter into.

What makes the Dallas art scene distinct from other regions?

The scale feels distorted. We're so close knit here, you can almost forget the size and scope of our institutions and our collections. The community is growing and expanding but it is highly influenced by key players. The energy is currently being focused on ushering in the next generation of great art patrons and leaders. There's been the recent appointment of Katherine Brodbeck as Senior Curator at the Dallas Museum of Art, Lisa and John Runyon are taking over TWO x TWO, and there's a strong focus on younger collectors.

What are some of the highlights of the 2019 edition of the fair?

At the fair, I am looking forward to seeing Caitlin Cherry at Luce Gallery. Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is bringing fan favorite Bruce Sherman vases. Nathalie Karg is presenting an all female booth of Rannva Kunoy, Heidi Hahn, and Elsa Sahal. Lisson Gallery, a first time exhibitor at the fair, is bringing a site-specific Lawrence Weiner. 12.26 Gallery is making its debut into the artworld at its hometown fair with works by Gracie Devito, Ryan Nord-Kitchen, Jackie Feng, and functional ceramics by Johanna Jackson. Offsite, the OUTDOOR PAINTINGS at the home of Kristen and Joe Cole, presented by Marlborough and CANADA, is not to be missed. Weather permitting—it is Spring in Texas.

What else are you looking forward to this Dallas Arts Month?

We will kick off the Dallas Arts Month festivities on the evening of Wednesday, April 10th at River Bend with openings at 214 Projects, AND NOW and Erin Cluley Gallery. Also that evening, SOLUNA will debut the commissioned performance of Egill Sæbjörnsson's When the Trolls Go Rolling In. Throughout the city, The Dallas Museum of Art presents the first major solo museum exhibition of LA-based painter Jonas Wood; The Nasher Sculpture Center features the first large scale sculptural exhibition of the work of Sterling Ruby, as well as celebrating the fourth Nasher Prize Laureate Isa Genzken; Dallas Contemporary presents three solo exhibitions: Francesco Clemente, Mario Sorrenti, and Yelena Yemchuk and a group exhibition entitled Self Service. The Power Station features born in beam of light by Rochelle Goldberg, while The Karpidas Collection will show artist Michele Abeles' selections from their permanent collection.

Tell me about 214 Projects. Why did the fair feel the need to have a space that would exhibit art year round?

We want our exhibitors to feel like they're connected to Dallas throughout the year, not just in April. It's tough for galleries to do truly ambitious exhibitions or projects with the time constraints of a fair. At 214 Projects, they have room and time to exhibit something spectacular and keep developing those connections with Texan institutions and art collectors. Harlan Levey, for example, has been with us since 2015 and has nurtured many links to Dallas. One of the works in his 214 Projects show, Emmanuel Van der Auwera: White Noise, was recently bought by the Dallas Museum of Art. That's one of our goals with the space—connect Dallas with artists from all over the world.

What type of programming will take place at 214 Projects?

It'll predominantly be exhibitions from our exhibitors, but it'll vary. Brandon Kennedy, our Director of Exhibitor Relations, has a background in books and I know he's hoping to see a book pop-up shop there soon.

What's next for the fair?

214 Projects will keep us busy!