

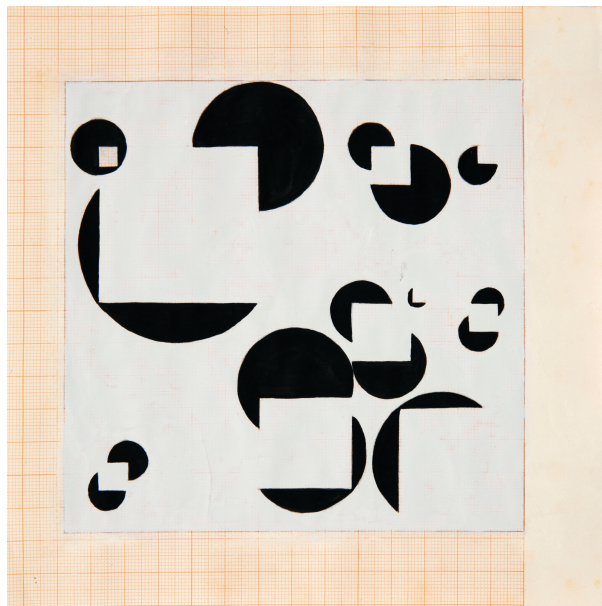
The New York Times

Frieze New York Adds More Blue-Chip 20th-Century Art

By NINA SIEGAL MAY 4, 2017

Since it was founded in 2003, the Frieze art fair has been devoted to selling works by the hottest new art talent, coming straight from the easel, foundry or studio. To visit Frieze is to be confronted with the most energetic art being produced today.

“Pretty much everything you see was made in the last 10 years,” said Victoria Siddall, the director of Frieze. “Work that’s very fresh and new and reflective of our time.”



Willys de Castro, *Projecto Para Pintura 167*, 1956
Gouache on paper, 7 x 7 in. (18 x 18 cm)

That was the original identity of Frieze, and the London-based art organization has somehow maintained that essential quality even as it has expanded to include the Frieze Masters fair in London (devoted to everything else, from ancient works to 20th-century art) and Frieze New York, another yearly showcase.

Maybe it should not have been a surprise to anyone when, two years ago at the New York fair, the Manhattan art dealer Acquavella Galleries displayed 20th-century works by Jean Dubuffet, Pablo Picasso and Cy Twombly in the same booth as new paintings by the Spanish artist Miquel Barceló and the American artist Damian Loeb.

But to Ms. Siddall, the inclusion of modernist works in a fair devoted to emerging art was something of a revelation. “It was a really eye-opening moment, that you could put that kind of work in this very contemporary context,” she said in a telephone interview. “Not only did it look good in that context, but it worked.”

For the sixth edition of Frieze New York, to be held May 5 to 7 at Randalls Island Park, the fair will feature more galleries capable of curating booths that combine those kinds of blue chip 20th-century works with art by emerging contemporary talents.

Frieze New York, in other words, has become something of a blend of the original Frieze London and Frieze Masters.

Acquavella sold the Dubuffet for \$2.5 million, said Nicholas Acquavella, the gallery’s director, a high price at a fair where works have typically sold for less than \$500,000. This year, the gallery will reach even farther back in history and present work by the early avant-garde artist Joaquín Torres-García of Uruguay, who worked from the late 19th century into the 1940s, alongside pieces by Mr. Loeb, Wayne Thiebaud, Dubuffet and possibly a work by Richard Diebenkorn.

Acquavella’s Dubuffet sale “proved that there’s a strong demand for blue-chip contemporary among our collectors,” Ms. Siddall said. “This year, we’ve built on that.”

One area of the fair will be devoted to comprehensive galleries presenting 20th-century art in conversation with newer work, including Acquavella; Lévy Gorvy, based in New York and London; Hauser & Wirth, based in Zurich; and Skarstedt, based in New York. Ms. Siddall has also added a handful of galleries that focus on 20th-century masters, like Castelli in New York and the London-based Eykyn MacLean and Bernard Jacobson Gallery.

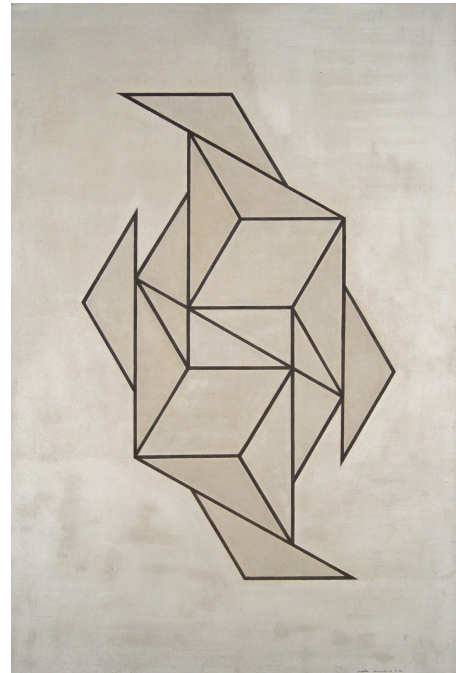
Axel Vervoordt, the Belgian gallery often credited with starting the trend of mixing contemporary art with antiquities in the 1990s, will also participate in Frieze New York this year.

Other galleries are rethinking their booths to explore links between established and emerging artists. Cheim & Reid, for example, plans to bring works by Louise Bourgeois, the grande dame of 20th-century art; Andy Warhol; Jenny Holzer, an established conceptual artist; and Lynda Benglis, who was first recognized in the late 1960s for her minimalist and process art.

These will be shown alongside works by contemporary artists like the Egyptian-born Ghada Amer, who makes sculpture, painting and garden projects. The unifying element in all of these works in the Cheim & Reid booth will be the color pink: a homage to the recent women's marches in Washington and in other cities around the world.

Henrique Faria Fine Art from New York aims to create a dialogue between Latin American midcentury modernist artists like the Brazilian painters Willys de Castro and Judith Lauand; historic conceptual artists like the Argentine asemic writer Mirtha Dermisache; Marisol, a forgotten star of the Pop Art movement; and new works by younger artists from the gallery's stable.

In encouraging these kinds of nontraditional juxtapositions, the fair is pushing the boundaries of its own definition of "contemporary art" — long a catchall term that replaced "modern." Contemporary art, a broad category that is defined by auction houses, galleries and collectors in many different ways, can mean anything produced after 1960, or everything since 1980, or sometimes, simply, works made by living artists.



Judith Lauand, *Concrete 178*, 1960
Tempera on canvas, 41.5 x 27 in. (105.5 x 69 cm)

An issue of E-flux Journal titled "What Is Contemporary Art?" [suggests in its opening essay](#) that "contemporary" is only a "watery signifier" that "repeatedly escapes our grasp through a set of evasive maneuvers."

Ms. Siddall said that contemporary art could be redefined as any art that was relevant to us today, including 20th-century art that had a crucial influence on artists working today — and even works by dead artists who were ignored in their own time because their sex, their race or another aspect of their identity did not suit the preferences of the era's art tastemakers.

She wants Frieze to keep up with contemporary collectors, who are already increasingly interested in how works of today connect to art from the past. "We went through a phase in the early 2000s where everyone was just obsessed with the new," Ms. Siddall said, "maybe because it was the beginning of a new century, and everyone was just looking forward."

But that phase seems to have ended, she said, and collectors are now also looking back. "If you're going to collect works by contemporary artists, why not look at the work those artists are obsessed with, too?" Ms. Siddall said. "It's about context, I suppose."

The interest also follows a shift in the museum world, where curators — especially artists who are given opportunities to curate exhibitions — are exploring collections through thematic lenses, rather than keeping to a strictly chronological formulation. Last year's stellar Met Breuer exhibition "Unfinished," for example, presented art from Titian through Piet Mondrian to Marlene Dumas, exploring works that the artists had left incomplete.

"The notion of looking at any art from any period through contemporary eyes is incredibly relevant," said Sheena Wagstaff, head of the modern and contemporary art department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a curator of "Unfinished." "In my life and in my career, the definition of contemporary art has been constantly shifting, and the parameters between when contemporary begins and modern ends has evolved over the last three decades."

But in allowing more older art to find its way into the booths at this most contemporary of art fairs, Frieze risks diluting its brand and becoming a bit more like the other big art fairs, like [Art Basel Miami Beach](#), that cater to a broader range of contemporary collectors.

Mr. Acquavella said he was not terribly concerned about that.

"There's not, in my mind, a risk of it going too far and losing that contemporary element and edge to it that is so important to the Frieze brand, because there's just a limit to the number of galleries that are able to do what we're talking about," he said. "They're strengthening the fair rather than diminishing the brand. It's a pretty massive space, and there's a lot of new art to see."