

Art fair wraps up with full house

Most dealers content with sales as event attracting talent from around world draws 60,000 visitors

Vivienne Chow
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RSS

The Hong Kong International Art Fair was packed with visitors of all ages and from all walks of life on its final day yesterday, and some galleries reported satisfactory sales.

More than 60,000 people visited the fair, which held a VIP preview on Wednesday and opened to the public on Thursday. They included renowned artists from around the world and important collectors such as Maja Hoffmann from Switzerland and Guy Ullens from Belgium, who came to the fair for the first time after it was acquired by MCH Swiss Exhibition (Basel), which organises Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach.

First-time exhibitor Hadrien de Montferand, who runs an eponymous gallery in Beijing's 798 art district, said he was happy with his sales.

Montferand, who brought works by Chinese artists Gu Wenda, Liu Xiaodong and Zhou Tiehai, said he had sold 60 per cent of the works by value.

Tornabuoni Art sold five works by Alighiero Boetti, including *Mappa* for €1 million (HK\$9.8 million).

Hong Kong-based de Sarthe Gallery sold the painting *313*, by Chinese artist Chu Teh-Chun, for over US\$3 million to a Southeast Asian collector. The gallery said it had done US\$7 million worth of business, also selling sculptures by French artist Bernar Venet, whose monumental works are on display at the piazza of the Cultural Centre and the Museum of Art until today.

Dealer Pascal de Sarthe said Asians had bought from the gallery, but he had also seen buyers from Australia and people other than the traditional European and American collectors.

At the fair were 266 galleries from 38 countries. It will return next year as Art Basel's first edition in Hong Kong. "I hope that [the organisers] will keep the Asian identity of the fair," de Sarthe said.

Another gallery that reported good results was Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art from Sydney, which exhibited in Asia One, a section dedicated to solo shows of Asian artists presented by Asian galleries.

Dealer Joanna Strumpf said most of the pieces she brought were sold.

"This is my debut on the international art scene," said one of the artists she represented, Alexander Seton, 35, who was thrilled by the response to his marble sculptures.

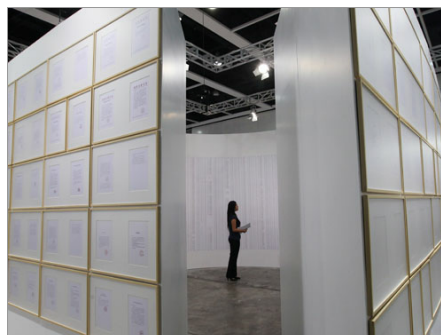
However, it is understood Western galleries located in Hall 3 were not satisfied with their sales this year despite the crowds, with collectors appearing to have missed seeing their galleries during the VIP preview, the most crucial time for business.

vivienne.chow@scmp.com

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A fair visitor views Ai Weiwei's *Cong*, which lists some of the earthquake victims identified in an investigation the artist backed.

Photo: Felix Wong

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