



Outset 2005: Patrons Plan What to Buy at Frieze

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by Louisa Buck

At an exclusive dinner last month, Tate Directors Sir Nicholas Serota, Vicente Tidoli, and Jan Debbaut joined Frieze Fair founders Matthew Slotover and Amanda Sharp and members of Outset Contemporary Art Fund to launch the 2005 Frieze Fair Special Acquisitions Fund. Since it was founded at the inaugural Frieze Fair two years ago, this fund has raised considerable sums- £100,000 in 2003, and £150,000 in 2004- to be spent buying works of art at the Frieze Fair to donate to Tate.

With Tate's annual government funding for all acquisitions frozen since 1982, and therefore worth a 20th of its original value, the fund provides an essential injection of new blood into its holdings. In 2003, curators Massimiliano Gioni from Milan and Susan Ghez from Chicago joined forces with the Tate team to shop for the fund, and snapped up pieces by rising international stars such as Olafur Eliasson, Yutaka Stone and Anri Sala. Last year it was Kasper König of Museum Ludwig in Cologne and the Walker Art Centre's Richard Flood who helped to acquire 13 pieces, including works by Scottish artists Martin Boyce and Mark Leckey as well as one of the fair's most talked-about works: Slovak artist Roman Ondak's moveable queue. This October, the invited curators are Chief Curator of MOMA Los Angeles Paul Schimmel and Suzanne Pagé, Director of Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris.

The Frieze Fund is just manifestation of how this select, by-invitation-only group of London-based art patrons who have been operational since 2003, have become such a significant art world presence. The group is the brainchild of co-founders Candida Gertler, who worked in journalism and PR before moving to London in 1993, and Yana Peel, who until last year was an executive director at Goldman Sachs.

The projects its members support include an artist-in-residence programme at the National Gallery, the establishment of an annual art commission for McLaren Formula One's corporate HQ, sponsorship of an educational programme for children with learning disabilities at Camden Arts Centre, and a major refurbishment of Camden Arts Centre's gardens which opens at the end of this month.

They are also partnering with the Lisson Gallery at the Venice Biennale in an exhibition of work by John Latham, Douglas Gordon and Anish Kapoor entitled "God is great," which opens at the Instituto Tecnico Nautico Venier, and this autumn sees the unveiling of a major collaboration with Artangel.