

INCLUDING
WHAT'S ON



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Outside Curators Buy for Tate at Frieze

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Outside curators buy for Tate at Frieze: Video, installations, and photos but no paintings

by Louisa Buck

It has now become an admirable Frieze tradition that, even before Thursday's professional preview from 2pm, a group of specially appointed curators from Tate and overseas institutions are given the run of the fair first thing to do some serious shopping on Tate's behalf.

This is made possible by the Frieze Fair Acquisitions Fund. Since it was founded at the inaugural Frieze Fair two years ago, this special fund- raised by London members of the organisation Outset Contemporary Art- has generated significant sums to be spent on works which are then donated to Tate's collection. This year Outset raised £150,000, most of which was put at the disposal of invited curators Paul Schimmel, Chief Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Suzanne Pagé, Director of Musée d'Art Moderne Paris. They were joined by Tate Collections Director Jan Debbaut and Tate curators Anne Gallagher and Jessica Morgan. All of them were in the fair scouring the stands at 8:30am yesterday.

"Our only strategy was to choose works that we found really convincing," said Suzanne Pagé, adding that she and Paul Schimmel had also had conversations with Tate curators about the current state of Tate's collection. "We went in with no consensus about media and we looked at everything," agreed Ms Morgan. "It was really about finding the best works and the works that are most relevant now."

The pieces purchased range from works by rising young video artists Anri Sala and Daria Martin on show at Frieze newcomers Hotel, to 1000 Cards in a cabinet by veteran British conceptual artist Stanley Brouwn. The Tate also now owns a large sculptural installation by Californian Matthew Monahan as well as a work by Brazilian artist Alexandre da Cunha.

"We are interested in reinvigorating the idea of 'emerging artists' by introducing artists who are still emerging in Britain despite the fact that they may now be in their sixties" said Ms Morgan, and Ms Pagé. "They are all young- it is the work that is important. I don't want to know if Stanley Brouwn is 30 or 60."

Significantly there are no paintings amongst the 14 works acquired, but the selectors all insist this was not deliberate. All agree, however that, with Tate's annual government funding for its acquisitions frozen since 1982, and therefore worth a 20th of its original value, the Frieze Fund provides an essential injection of new blood into its holdings. "Having this relatively massive amount of money to spend in one go gives us a huge jump ahead" enthuses Ms Morgan, who admits that "each one of these acquisitions would normally be a struggle for us."