



THE ART NEWSPAPER

Art market // News

Early sales at the Dallas Art Fair prove even a solar eclipse can't overshadow Texas's hot market

As demand for art in Dallas and the rest of Texas heats up, dealers are eager to get a foothold in the Lone Star State—including at the new-ish Dallas Invitational satellite fair

Carlie Porterfield

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Attendees stream through the Fashion Industry Gallery at the VIP preview day of the Dallas Art Fair on Thursday (4 April).

Exploredinary

Dealers reported strong sales during the VIP preview of the Dallas Art Fair on Thursday (4 April) and were even more optimistic about making connections with collectors and institutions in Texas, as the art market in the region continues to grow.

The fair nearly overlaps with the “Great American Eclipse” taking place on Monday 8 April, with Dallas being the largest city in the eclipse's path of totality. Some travelling attendees say they will stick around Dallas to take advantage of the just under four minutes of totality the city will see. More than one million tourists are estimated to be travelling to Texas and will add around \$1.4bn to the state's economy to see the last total solar eclipse that will be visible in the contiguous US until 2044.

The Austin-based gallery Martha's sold out its stand of paintings by local artists Conner O'Leary and RF. Alvarez, with prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$9,000. Cris Worley, a longtime Dallas dealer, sold works by Erick Swenson including *Seance* (2019-23), along with pieces by Robert Sagerman, Raychael Stine and William Cannings. Pencil on Paper, a Dallas gallery taking part in the fair for the first time, sold work by Elyse Hradecky and Jessica Vollrath. Dallas gallery Keijzers Koning placed a piece by Kate Barbee, a Dallas native now working in Brooklyn, with a collector who flew in from California to see the work, a gallery representative said.

The Los Angeles-, Bucharest- and New York-based gallery Nicodim sold *Sjambokland* (2022) by Thania Petersen to the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) for \$60,000 through the Dallas Art Fair Foundation Acquisition Program, which places works from the fair into the DMA's collection thanks to an annual gift from the Dallas Art Fair Foundation. The gallery also sold four works by the Montreal-based artist Chantal Khoury priced between \$15,000 and \$25,000 each, four works by the Polish artist Agnieszka Nienartowicz ranging from \$20,000 to \$30,000, and a painting by the Spanish artist Ángeles Agrela for \$55,000.



Seance (2019-23) by Erick Swenson at Cris Worley's stand, with views of work by Paul Manes and Kelli Vance in the background.

Courtesy Cris Worley

Inman Gallery sold *The Table of Love* (2022) by JooYoung Choi to the DMA through the Dallas Art Fair Acquisition Program, and placed *Lost* (2023) by Houston-based artist Alexis Pye with a private collection. The New York-based gallery Management sold *Pim* (2024) by Tim Brawner for \$14,000 during the fair's VIP preview day. McClain Gallery sold three paintings by the Modernist artist Dorothy Hood (1919-2000) for prices ranging from \$30,000 to \$76,000.

Piero Atchugarry Gallery from Miami reported selling five works, totalling \$65,300. Luis de Jesus Los Angeles sold *Montgomery Flag* (2024) by June Edmonds for \$40,000 to a local collector; two papier-mâché sculptures by Jean Lowe in the range of \$4,000 to \$5,000 to a Houston-based collector and Evita Tezeno's collage painting *No one else makes me feel the colors that you bring me* (2024) will be going through the acquisition process of a major Texas museum for approximately \$30,000, a gallery representative said.

Mrs. Gallery from Queens, New York, sold an \$8,000 Chris Bogia bonsai sculpture and an \$80,000 Carolyn Salas sculpture. The Boston-area gallery Praise Shadows, which is showing a solo stand dedicated to works by Crystalle Lacouture, sold six drawings that address the 2022 mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, along with four woodblock prints.



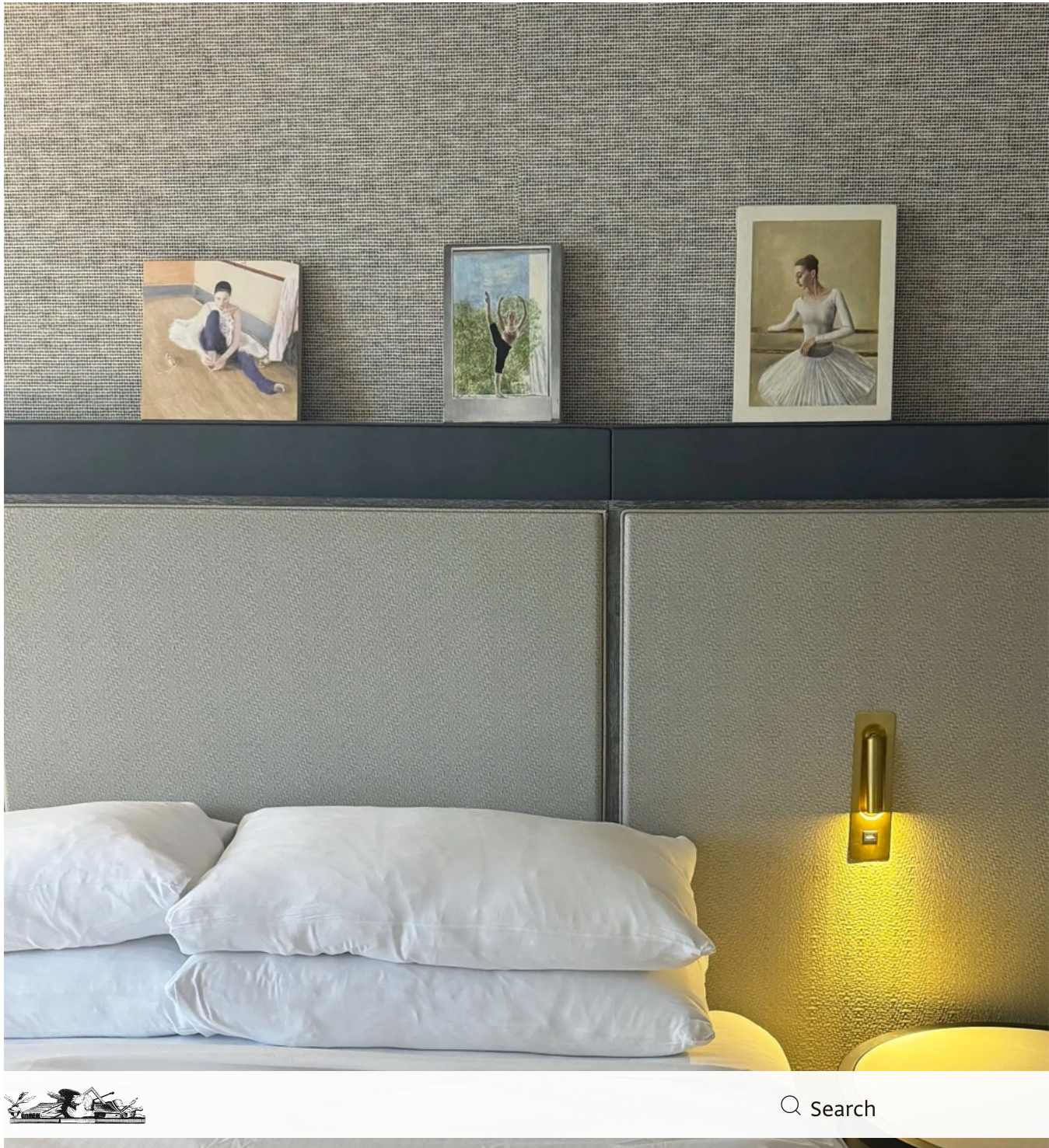
Conner O'Leary's *Reclining Nude* (2024)
Courtesy of Martha's

There's a new fair in town

At the Dallas Invitational, held across the street from the Dallas Art Fair in the Fairmont Hotel, Los Angeles-based Night Gallery sold three paintings by Japanese artist Keita Morimoto: *Out the Window* (2024) and *Calling you* (2024) for \$18,000 each, and *Nightfall* (2024) for \$26,000.

In the Invitational's second edition after it was founded in 2023 by local dealer James Cope from And Now gallery, the hotel fair saw more foot traffic thanks to increased media attention, word-of-mouth, social media presence and a longer run. Opening the same day as the Dallas Art Fair's VIP preview, the satellite fair on the Fairmont's 17th floor was busy well into the afternoon, Cope says. Many of the Dallas Invitational participants took advantage of the hotel setting to display smaller art works and invite collectors into the quiet spaces for more intimate conversations, according to participating dealers.

"I think people really like the smaller, curated, more thoughtful approach," Cope says. "I think that's what the collectors like, that it's manageable. It's not overwhelming. People will come in, sit on the bed and kind of let their guard down a little bit more, and you can show them work in a more relaxed setting."



Dallas gallery And Now's room at the Fairmont Hotel during the Dallas Invitational.
Carlie Porterfield

This year's Invitational has 14 galleries participating, including a handful that previously took part in the Dallas Art Fair across the street, like Various Small Fires, Night Gallery and James Fuentes. Cope says he did not set out to "poach" dealers from the larger, more established fair, and that he was approached by those galleries to take part in the Invitational.

“There’s some talk within the community about the Dallas Invitational being in competition with the Dallas Art Fair, but I’m not trying to disrupt anything, I’m just trying to add more to the Dallas scene,” Cope says. “Competition is good, right? It creates growth. I saw an opportunity to do something different that people will be interested in. Dallas is big enough for two.”

The Dallas Art Fair’s director, Kelly Cornell, agrees. “More is more,” she says. “I don't think [the Dallas Invitational] is concerning. There's a big market here.”

Both Cope and Cornell say their respective fairs receive a lot of demand from gallerists hoping to take part and gain access to Dallas’s large collector base plus the region’s museums and other institutions. Even dealers at the Dallas Invitational who did not have any finalised sales to report at press time say they are happy with the introductions they made during the fair’s first day.

“It’s not a conventional fair framework, so we weren’t really pushing pre-sales. We’re more excited about what possibilities might emerge from having a presentation here,” says the New York-based gallerist James Fuentes. “It’s guaranteed this is going to be very good for business and for our artists, especially with a couple of museum conversations that we’ve had—not only museums in Dallas, but also San Antonio. It’s not a heavy lift, but it’s high-impact for us.”

Dallas (art) buyers club



Major Dallas collector Howard Rachofsky during the Dallas Art Fair VIP preview. Exploredinary

Dallas collectors run the gamut in terms of taste, art education and budget, dealers at this week's fairs in the city say. Their ranks include trendsetters like Kenny Goss and Howard and Cindy Rachofsky (who may be looking to fund an acquisitions spree with their consignment of an eight-figure Lucio Fontana to Sotheby's this week) as well as more recent transplants to the booming Sunbelt metropolis. It has one of the more established and active art markets among Texas's half-dozen major cities.

"They're at all levels of appreciation. Some people have art history backgrounds and they've been going to museums for years and they're collectors. And other people just want to find something beautiful for their home, or keep up to date with what's going on in the world," says Cheryl Vogel, the vice president and curator of Valley House Gallery and Sculpture Garden, the oldest modern art gallery in Dallas.

This year, the gallery will celebrate its 70th anniversary. Valley House Gallery's stand at the Dallas Art Fair features works that range in price from \$165,000 to \$800,000, and includes a set of 18 *Eclipse* paintings by Emily LaCour, inspired by the birth of the artist's son.

One thing almost everyone in Dallas agrees on is that the art scene in the city has grown exponentially over the years. The city is home to an emerging, younger generation of collectors and dealers. One of the city's newer galleries is Pencil on Paper, opened by Valerie Gillespie just before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This is the gallery's first time showing at the Dallas Art Fair, and Gillespie has filled its relatively small stand with works by Abi Salami, Elyse Hradecky and Jessica Vollrath, three women artists with connections to the Dallas area.

"Womanhood was a big theme, but more so human experience. Almost every artist that I work with talks about the woman experience, the Black experience, the human condition, social issues in the world and cultural commentary," Gillespie says. "I've noticed that I seem to gravitate towards artists that have that narrative."

Born and raised in Dallas, Gillespie says the city's art scene has also grown more inclusive over the years. Pencil on Paper is one of four Black-owned galleries now operating in Dallas, she says, and works by more Bipoc (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) artists are appearing in local galleries and institutions.

"I can walk into galleries here and feel welcomed. It wasn't always like that when I was in my teens," Gillespie says. "We're all just sharing the love and, slowly, mindsets are changing."

- [Dallas Art Fair](#), until 7 April, Fashion Industry Gallery, Dallas