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Collecting

The tastemakers are here

Alpha collectors with private museums to fill make their presence felt at Art Basel

BASEL. Budi Tek, the Indonesian-Chinese collector, has been shopping at Art Basel this week for an ambitious museum complex he is building in Shanghai. This is due to open in stages over the next decade.

As Art Unlimited opened, Tek purchased the Fred Sandback installation *Untitled*, (*Sculptural Study, Seven-part Right-angled Triangular Construction*), 1982/2010, for just under \$500,000 from David Zwirner and Verna (U20). Tek told us he was also interested in buying Dan Flavin's 1972-75 installation nearby (Paula Cooper, U24). "I had a very intuitive reaction to those pieces," he said.

Tek is one of a growing number of collectors who are putting their art on display in their own museums. From London, Berlin and Moscow to Sydney, New York and Beijing, the very rich are buying art and showing it off in quasi-institutional settings like never before, and influencing the buying patterns of countless others (see p7). Some of these supercollectors are in Basel, including the American publisher Peter Brant, Mexican fruit juice heir Eugenio Lopez of the Jumex Collection, curators for the Tasmanian gambling magnate David Walsh, and Marty Margulies and the Rubells from Miami.

The art these collectors buy often have features in common, all of which are in evidence at the fair. For one thing, they are not usually constrained by considerations of size. "Now is the time for me to have a serious space because I have so many big things that maybe a lot of people can't imagine," said Tek. Many of the works at Art Basel would be difficult, if not impossible, to display in the average private home.

Collectors with their own museums often look for art with a strong sensory impact, preferring it to more sober work. Olivier Varenne, a French



Going to China: Fred Sandback's yarn sculpture sold for just under \$500,000

curator based in London who buys art for Tasmanian collector David Walsh, yesterday bought *Two Sisters* by the Turner Prize-winning artist Susan Philipsz from the Parisian dealer Natalie Seroussi (2.0/D1), a 2009 sound piece that tells the story of siblings who love the same man, with murderous results.

Many of these spaces are in cities where the public have few opportunities to see contemporary art, so work that is either bold or entertaining is often preferred. Walsh, who opened his museum outside Hobart in January, describes it as a "subversive Disneyland". As of last week, 200,000 people have visited.

Spheres of influence

"All good exhibitions influence me," said Tek, singling out the unveiling of Miuccia Prada's collection at the Ca' Corner della Regina palace in Venice during the biennale, two weeks ago, as a memorable show. It was the fashion designer's collection of

Italian post-war art that Tek said inspired him to buy the Sandback at Art Unlimited because of its minimalist aesthetic.

Back at Art Basel, the impact of the Prada exhibition, which was widely praised, is rippling through the fair. Massimo Di Carlo of Galleria dello Scudo in Verona (2.0/C5), who is showing works by Manzoni, Burri and Fontana, believes it could lead contemporary art collectors to think historically. "[Prada] displays Manzoni next to Jeff Koons, which is what makes the collection interesting," he said. Prada is

one of the collectors at the very top of the "taste-making" food chain, along with a handful of others such as French billionaire François Pinault.

Works similar to those displayed at the Palazzo Grassi and the Punta della Dogana, Pinault's Venetian spaces, are on show at the fair. They include Giuseppe Penone's installation of tea leaves held back by mesh, *Respirare L'Ombra (To Breathe the Shadow)*, 1998, a room-sized version of which is in the Grassi. "When you see grand installations like that, of course, it resonates

with people," said Andrew Richards, the senior director at Marian Goodman (2.0/B17).

Charles Saatchi, who recently opened a well-received show of sculpture in London, may not be the dominant tastemaker he once was, but is still influential. Casey Kaplan (2.1/N16) represents two of the artists in the exhibition, Matthew Brannon and David Thorpe. He said that museums belonging to the likes of Saatchi, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin and Hans Rasmus Astrup of the Astrup Fearnley in Oslo, build reputations and market confidence.

"I think a lot of people who are contemplating buying art are unsure, and it means something [to be shown in these spaces] because [new collectors] are only hearing what the dealers have to say and the dealers want to push the work [of their artists]. The top private collectors and museums certainly make people feel more assured," said Caplan.

Others take a different view. Jake Miller, the director of The Approach gallery in London (2.1/P2), whose artists include Brannon and Gary Webb, said: "I think shows like Saatchi's are one thing in a line of things that are happening. The big public museums are still more important in building reputation: if you have pieces in the collection of the Tate or MoMA, it still has more clout." ■

Cristina Ruiz
with additional reporting by
The Art Newspaper team

My space: coming to Shanghai



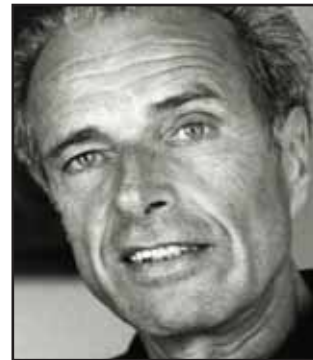
Collector Budi Tek opened a gallery for his art, which then consisted mainly of Chinese contemporary work, in Jakarta in 2008. Tek (above with his wife) made his money in the agribusiness. He is now building a collection of western art for a huge museum in Shanghai, which has been designed by the Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto. The first phase of Tek's museum is due to open in 2013.

The building will boast 8,000 sq. m of exhibition space, with two-thirds for a display from Tek's permanent collection, while the remaining space will house rotating exhibitions. Tek said the museum, which may include separate pavilions for major installations by Anselm Kiefer and Bill Viola, will be financially "sustainable" in the long-term.

"I think I am the first Chinese or Indonesian to be seriously making a collection into an institution. The first to build up a sustainable collection system," Tek said. Revenue will come from a variety of services offered on site, including hotels, conference rooms, and even a wedding chapel to be designed by Belgian artist Wim Delvoye. Tek said building the entire complex will take time. "I have two five-year plans. Within ten years, I can build something reasonable," he said, adding that he also owns property in Bali and may open a kunsthalle-like space there one day. ■ C.R.

Beyeler's final gift: an acquisition budget for his museum

BASEL. The Fondation Beyeler is to have its first acquisition budget thanks to the late Ernst Beyeler, the art dealer and co-founder of Art Basel, whose private collection it houses. According to Sam Keller, the director of the foundation, the funding to add to the collection comes from an endowment, comprising money from Beyeler plus the proceeds of a Christie's auction of his inventory to be held in London next week (21-22 June). Prior to Beyeler's death in February 2010, he gave "one or two pieces" a year to the Renzo Piano-designed museum, which opened to the public in 1997. His will stipulated that his commercial gallery should close and its



Ernst Beyeler

inventory be sold, helping to cover the foundation's operating costs and, said Keller, "to finance other ambitions", including

purchasing works by the 40-plus artists in the museum's permanent collection. Keller would not comment on whether or not the foundation was buying this week at Art Basel, the fair Beyeler helped establish in 1970.

The 40 lots in Christie's evening auction on 21 June are estimated to make between £46.9m and £68.4m, and include an imposing, late Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1914-17, the highest estimated lot at £17m-£24m. Sotheby's and Phillips de Pury were also invited to pitch for the Beyeler consignment; Christie's is believed to have made the better offer, in terms of its commission structure. ■

Melanie Gerlis

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