

Lifestyle

S'pore woos art buyers with big names

SINGAPORE is taking centre stage on the global art circuit this week, as collectors descend for South-east Asia's largest art fair, auctions and a video by Russian feminist art collective Pussy Riot.

Anchoring Singapore Art Week is Art Stage, a fair featuring 130 galleries offering works by Takashi Murakami, Mark Quinn and Nam June Paik.

In its fourth year, Art Stage plays a major part in Singapore's quest to develop itself into a regional art hub to woo more high-net-worth individuals to settle here.

"Singapore is combining art, lifestyle and wealth management all into one," said Mr Sundaram Tagore, who runs galleries in New York, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Though smaller than Hong Kong's Art Basel fair held in May, Art Stage aims at pre-

serving its regional character with new galleries from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos exhibiting for the first time.

It's also a huge opportunity for Singapore-based galleries to attract a wider clientele.

"A lot of collectors are coming in from the region," said Ms Janice Kim, owner of Space Cottonseed, which is showing four works from Paik priced between US\$110,000 (S\$140,000) and US\$400,000. "For me, this is the most important week."

Singapore has 174,000 millionaires and neighbouring Indonesia, 123,000, according to the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2013.

More than 1,000 VIPs got a preview of works at Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre yesterday, where traditionally some of the most important purchases are made before Art Stage opens to the public today.

Auction houses are taking advantage of the influx of well-heeled clients this week to hold sales.

Local dealer Galerie Sogan & Art is showing works by Singaporean artist Jolene Lai, including a painting of a woman lying prone on a slaughtering block, surrounded by animals.

Blue-chip international galleries are using Art Stage to feature Asian artists alongside more established Western names. Galerie Perrotin is showing Filipino Ronald Ventura, who holds the auction record for a living South-east Asian artist, with French artist Sophie Calle and Murakami of Japan.

Primo Marella of Milan is presenting Indonesian painter Heri Dono and London's White Cube is featuring Zhang Huan and Liu Wei next to Damien Hirst and Quinn, as well as more conceptual pieces from Damian Ortega and Cerith Wyn Evans.

Romance-Conti Borobudur Fine Art Auction's Saturday sale features Romance-Conti wines estimated to sell for as much as US\$14,400 per bottle, jewellery, a painting by Indonesian modern master Affandi with a high estimate of US\$400,000 and four works by I Nyoman Masriadi.

Rival auction houses East-Ouest, Larasati and 33Auction are also holding sales.

For those with tighter budgets, Art Apart Fair will transform rooms, lobbies and corridors at the Park Royal Hotel into pop-up galleries from tomorrow to Sunday to sell mostly works by lesser-known artists at prices below S\$10,000.

On Saturday, at a black-tie gala dinner, Prudential Eye Awards will announce the winner of its emerging-artists competition from a shortlist, including a video by Pussy Riot and Yang Yongliang from China.

Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, who were released from prison on Dec 23 under an amnesty issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin after being jailed for inciting religious hatred and hooliganism, will attend.

Art Stage runs from today to Sunday at the Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre.

BLOOMBERG



SACRED ANIMAL: The Buddhist Bug, "a fantastic saffron-coloured creature that can span the length of a 30m bridge or coil into a small orange ball", is a work by Cambodian-born Anida Yoeu Ai. PHOTO: ANIDA YOEU AI



STRONG CHARACTER: In his Tattoo photo series, Qiu Zhijie painted negative symbols and characters on his body to make a statement. PHOTO: QIU ZHIJIE



PERFORMANCE ART: Painting by Samuel Quinteros. The make-up and costumes of characters in his art reflect his love of the stage. PHOTO: SAM QUINTEROS



WHAT LIES BENEATH: One of Singaporean artist Jane Lee's works. Her exhibition, 100 Faces, is being held at Sundaram Tagore Gallery. Her works will be featured in the Southeast Asia Platform of Art Stage. PHOTO: JANE LEE

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