

BUILDING BRIDGES

Art Stage posits that art can't be defined by price alone

AS CONTEMPORARY ART fairs mushroom around the world, it may be hard sometimes to differentiate between them. In Asia, Art Basel-Hong Kong has now firmly established itself as a gathering of the giants of the international art world. The more modest Art Stage Singapore, now in its fourth year, with more than a hundred galleries participating, has developed a unique identity by anchoring itself firmly on Asian ground.

"A lot of art fairs offer a very general presentation, with no reference to the market of the location where they are held. They largely present Western art and Western galleries. Art Stage, on the other hand, has always had a strong Southeast Asian focus. But it has never fallen into the category of being a regional fair because it upholds international standards of presentation, and deftly mixes Western and Asian galleries of importance," says Sundaram Tagore of Sundaram Tagore Gallery, which has participated in the fair since its inception.

The founder-director of Art Stage Singapore, Lorenzo Rudolf, says this year's edition offers collectors "a step in a totally new direction" by presenting curated regional platforms to help inform them about the range of art in the region.



Jolene Lai's "Night Market," 2013, at the Southeast Asia Platform

"Asia is still very, very segmented; each art scene is mainly national. In other words, we have to build really strong bridges between these art scenes, bring them together, and

liaise with them," he says.

Rudolf also acknowledges a widening gap between the commercial and academic art worlds today. "Years ago, academics, museums, critics were making the artists. But the art world has now turned on its head; today it's the market. But more and more people are realizing

even if ultimately everything is commercial and for sale."

There will be eight platforms — India, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia — each offering a mix of established and emerging artists. "We wanted platforms that would be a first introduction to a specific

"Asia is still very, very segmented. We have to bring these art scenes together."

we need to bring back the two together. You can't only define art with prices, sizes, and brands. Art is culture and needs content and context. That's why we are working with leading Asian curators with our new platforms. We are bringing commerce and academics together,

art scene. We didn't want to go in a cutting-edge direction. But in the future, we want to play with the format. I could imagine choosing very young curators, or foreign curators showing their own vision of another art scene," says Rudolf. — SONIA KOLESNIKOV-JESSOP



websites for the art world
exhibit-e.com

ZEN AND THE ART OF SUBTRACTION

SINGAPOREAN ARTIST JANE Lee has a strong presence in her home city this month with a solo exhibition, "100 Faces," at Sundaram Tagore Gallery as well as a large-scale installation at Art Stage Singapore as part of the Southeast Asia Platform.

Lee is best known for abstract canvases in which she explores the very nature of paint and what constitutes a painting. In her latest experimental works, influenced by Zen philosophy and the use of empty space in compositions, she subtracts paint from the canvases.

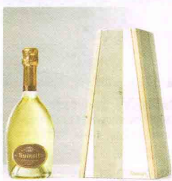


Jane Lee's "50 Faces," 2013, at the Southeast Asia Platform

"Through working on these pieces, I thought of the different faces that I encountered during one of my spiritual workshops about past lives," she says. The experience gave birth to "100 Faces."

An extension of this concept is the striking 10-meter-long installation at the fair, titled "50 Faces," comprising 50 square-shaped paintings made with acrylic heavy gel, reflective mirror, and fiberglass base. "This is my attempt to create a portrait and to incorporate viewers' faces into the paintings in order to add an element of interaction," Lee explains. — S.K.J.

HISTORY IN A BOX



Ruinart Blanc de Blancs

OVER THE PAST year, Dutch industrial designer Piet Hein Eek has collaborated with Ruinart Champagne at art fairs to create large-scale installations based on the wooden trapezoid box he had designed for the Ruinart Blanc de Blancs bottle. Visitors to Art Stage Singapore's VIP room will witness a new composition — two wooden, trapezoidal modules arranged in the form of an hourglass and filled with Ruinart Blanc de Blancs bottles. The handmade boxes make a historical reference to the French house's decision in the late 18th century to start using wooden crates instead of baskets to ship its champagne. — S.K.J.

THE GLOBAL SOURCE FOR NONSTOP NEWS.