



Art Rotterdam benefits from gap in Dutch market

Fair becomes the country's main trade event after the demise of Art Amsterdam last year

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Art Rotterdam has become the Netherlands premier art fair following the demise of the 27-year-old Art Amsterdam, which was cancelled last year due to organisational failures and lost sponsorship deals amidst a struggling Dutch economy.

Amsterdam's dealers put traditional rivalries between the cities aside and turned out for the 2014 Rotterdam event (5-9 February) with 49 Dutch galleries taking part alongside dealers from neighbouring countries—especially Belgium—and a smattering from across Europe, together with New York's Horton Gallery and Misako & Rosen from Tokyo. In all, 114 galleries exhibited, up from the 94 last year, and 21,500 visitors came, a jump of 35% on last year, the fair's organisers say.

The expansion has meant a move out of Rotterdam's regenerating docklands, where satellite shows still gather as part of the city's Art Week. The main fair's new home—a shuttle-bus ride away from the dismal suburbs—is a masterwork of early Functionalism, the World Heritage-listed Van Nelle Factory.

A regional affair, Art Rotterdam concentrates on young artists and offers works priced mainly under €10,000 that appeal to the frugal Dutch market. The fair's New Art Section has expanded significantly (25 galleries this year, 21 from outside The Netherlands), and the fair prides itself on launching or boosting the careers of rising artists such as Oscar Murillo, Ryan Trecartin and the recent Turner Prize winners Laure Prouvost and Elizabeth Price.

The Cologne dealer Martin Kudlek was among a number of dealers attracted to Art Rotterdam because of this niche and its lower price points: "I can be more experimental at a younger fair for new and young artists."

As with many art fairs these days, several dealers approached the event as more of a showing than selling opportunity for their artists. Mo van Der Have, the director of the Dutch gallery Torch, was pleasantly surprised to have sold at least one work by each of the photographers he brought, including Popel Coumou, Nadav Kander and Ellen Kooi: "An artist usually needs to be über well-known for the Dutch market to buy," he said. Some galleries reported important sales: Misako & Rosen sold out its solo show of works by Hisachika Takahashi including a painting to the Dallas Museum of Art.

While most Dutch companies are not adding to their collections right now, the Andaz art hotel in Amsterdam acquired two video works from the Projections section that it sponsored: *Priapus Agonistis*, 2013 by Mary Reid Kelley with Patrick Kelley, from the London gallery Pilar Corrias, and a 2013 installation by the Finnish artist Erkkä Nissinen (€15,000) from Ellen de Bruijne. The hotel donated Nissinen's work to the Stedelijk Museum and the De Hallen Haarlem museum in a joint deal.

A few notable international collectors made the trip, including Barbara and Aaron Levine from Washington, DC, but most were from closer to home. These included Hugo Brown, a Dutch collector of photography, who snapped up works recording the lives of white South Africans by the printer turned photographic artist Katherine Cooper through Amsterdam's Flatland Gallery, priced up to €2,250 each.