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Dallas Rising
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If there's one word to describe the Dallas Art Fair, which ran from April 11 through 13, it might be "approachable." The relatively modest size makes it digestible in a few hours and the staffers are welcoming and friendly (even the New York galleries seemed to embrace Southern hospitality).

As Dallas gains attention as a cultural hub, the caliber of the fair's offerings continues to rise. This year's standouts included Will Boone's white canvases spray-painted with orange geometric shapes at Jonathan Viner's booth and colorful sculptures by Nick Van Woert at OHWOW, which seem lifted directly from Willy Wonka's factory. And Milwaukee's Green Gallery, which showcased work by Michelle Grabner and Spencer Sweeney, made it clear that the art world might do well to turn its gaze toward the Midwest.

Dallas has three key ingredients that make it an ideal place to cultivate an arts scene—space, money, and civic-minded patrons, a combination best seen in the not-to-be-missed tours of some of the city's most notable private collections.

Marguerite Hoffman's Sol Lewitt brick wall snakes around the lush greenery on her property, while Deedie Rose's enormous bronze Richard Serra and set of concrete Damian Ortega sculptures are perfectly reflected in the glass walls of her Antoine Predock-designed home. These generous, sometimes eccentric patrons were more than happy to show visitors their astounding collections. Photographs were encouraged, and they even let you pet their dogs.

Texas charm meets art world panache at the Joule Dallas Hotel in the city's recently revitalized downtown. From the lawn across the street, Tony Tasset's unsettling eyeball sculpture—the hotel was also the site of The Eye Ball, the culminating gala of Dallas Arts Week—observes the action in the lobby, a contemporary art space with work by Andrew Kuo, Leonardo Elrich, and Tony Cragg. The publisher Taschen's arty tomes top every available surface (there's a shop just past reception). Also for the conspicuous consumer: an outpost of the chic L.A. boutique Tenoversix comes stocked with Opening Ceremony and Rachel Comey, who staged a pop-up nail art salon where one could get manicures in the style of Kusama or Basquiat. There's more pampering in the subterranean spa, ESPA. Following a long day at the fair, guests sought oasis in the bubbly co-ed pool, or they sprung for the "shower experience," administered by a dystopian future appliance customizable via touch-screen. At night, the Joule served as the fair's playground, playing host to dinner parties—most notably, Julian Schnabel's fete on the hotel's upper terrace—while the bar at C.B.D. Provisions, the hotel's restaurant, was where blue-chip dealers bragged or lamented about their changing fortunes. And if you happened to look up from your spicy mezcal cocktail, it wasn't hard to spot the artist Richard Phillips shamelessly canoodling with his new flame, singer Liza Thorn.

For the unrivaled Dallas experience, Lee Harvey's is it. Yes, the dive bar's live music may include subpar Tom Petty covers and the fish tacos are anticlimactic, but after a couple of dirt-cheap beers at a picnic table on the fenced-in lot, any city slicker's ice-cold heart will start to melt, and not from the Texas heat.

Though Dallas can claim the world's first Neiman Marcus, you might want to travel off the beaten path to the hipster neighborhood of Deep Ellum to visit Factory Girl, a vintage shop curated with as much thoughtfulness as the city's blue chip private collections. "Edie Sedgwick would be at ballet class and she'd throw a Halston overcoat over her leotard and go to Studio 54," says owner Heather Mayo, who could pass for Edie at a glance. "It's all about finding that one special piece"—like a Lanvin jumpsuit, Gaultier corset, or floor-sweeping silk kimono, all of which were spotted in the store.

Away from the fair, there were plenty of alternative ways to take in art, fashion, and, of course, free wine.

The Power Station, one the first forward-thinking contemporary galleries in town, celebrated the opening of Norwegian artist Fredrik Vaerslev's solo show with a Southern crab boil.

Certainly the week's most talked about exhibition showcased the portraits of an artist who, unfortunately, was not available for a studio visit. George W. Bush's "The Art of Leadership: A President's Personal Diplomacy," at the George W. Bush Presidential Cen-

ter, features the visages of world leaders as depicted by our 43rd president. The only word for this show is “surreal.” If you want to delight your Instagram followers, be sure to take a selfie with the presidential selfie. (Sadly, an already Internet-famous bathroom self-portrait was not on show.)

Another noteworthy solo show was Bettina Pousttchi at the Nasher Sculpture Center. The German artist re-imagined the pristine museum space as that icon of Americana: the drive-through. Rubber coats the marble floors and a curated selection of sculptures from the Nasher’s collection flank the flawless lane stripes. Pousttchi’s own pieces are there, too: white towers constructed of twisted crowd barricades, they are illuminated by neon lights—an homage to Dan Flavin’s homage to Vladimir Tatlin.

Although KNOW-WAVE, the pop-up pirate radio station in the Joule hosted by OHWOW’s Aaron Bondaroff, was where the young and cool of the fair—like Mary Boone’s new in-house curator Piper Marshall—could be distinguished by their fashion sense (in spite of the medium), Ryan McNamara oversaw the auditory experience of the week. The artist’s performance featured members of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra being pushed around the Meyerson Symphony Center on wheeled platforms. Solemn and understated, the piece stood out in a noisy, go-go week of openings and deal-making.

And then there were the two shows that sparked countless conversations, even if some were accompanied by eye-rolling: the solo exhibitions of Julian Schnabel and Richard Phillips at Dallas Contemporary. These are artists who, on the surface, have plenty in common—both are painters, commercially successful, and have a Q rating that extends beyond the art world. But although the bulk of the museum’s cavernous space is dedicated to Phillip’s retrospective—his first museum show in the U.S.—it’s Schnabel’s show that takes time to digest. There’s a heavy somberness to the new paintings, and not just the one that is an homage to the late artist Mike Kelley. “I think I’m probably kind of sad,” Schnabel confessed.

The party of the week was for the David Quadrini-organized group show on Saturday—though at 11 PM on the last night of a long week, few eyes were on the art. Hosted by Erin Wasson, the fete stretched into the wee hours of the morning.