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Fine Art Takes the Spotlight

BY SARA SHEREEN BAKHSHIAN

Fine art will approach the runway for the 13th annual Los Angeles Art Show from noon Thursday, January 24th, through 6 p.m. Sunday, January 27th, at the Santa Monica Airport Barker Hangar, 3021 Airport Ave. in Santa Monica.

The Fine Art Dealers Association (FADA) event will include more than 10,000 works ranging from the 16th century to the present, with over 125 international and American galleries in attendance, says a spokesman.

Ultimately, the exposition is set to unite the artist community, galleries and museums, educate the population about fine art diversity and place emphasis on Los Angeles's importance to the art world.

One unifying attribute is the addition of the International Fine Print Dealers Association's 23rd annual Los Angeles Fine Print Fair of 28 exhibitors, with pieces ranging from 18th century European to contemporary works.

Fine Art Dealers Association president Howard Rehs says that while a few exhibitors in the past had prints on display, now there will be more impetus with an entire section. He says this epitomizes the show's progress, as every year more people get interested in participation.

That participation is at least partly fueled by art show producer Kim Martindale, who spends the year before each installment traveling domestically and internationally to other shows, galleries and museums and finding more ways to unite the LA community.

Martindale, of KR Martindale Show Management, has been involved with the art show since its inception and notes that a great attribute this year is the added involvement of international galleries — something that should continue to grow.

He also hopes that attendees will consider mixing their collections with various periods and types of pieces, such as oils, watercolors, sculptures and video art.

"You can come and see that whole variety of art and develop the passion of art," Martindale says.

His own passion is evident in the art show's education element, according to Jori Finkel, a regular contributor for The New York Times and a West Coast contributing editor for Art & Auction magazine.

Finkel, who will lead a seminar called Art Collectors' Boot Camp at 10 a.m. Saturday, January 26th, says that high prices and elitism can intimidate novice collectors, but this exposition is different.

"This fair really helps to make the art world more accessible," she says.

The accessibility is visible through such various workshop topics as collecting, art politics, Realism, wine and Los Angeles as an art capital.

Finkel's collecting boot camp, for example, will give attendees hands-on experience. First, they will discuss various collecting strategies. Then each will receive \$50,000 in virtual money to create a collection based on works available at the show. Afterward, they will regroup to critique each other's choices.

She adds that too much time is spent talking about art while it isn't in the vicinity. But with her workshop, discussion will take place while seeing the pieces up close.

Insightful art collecting and its relating enthusiasm is becoming equally apparent in New York City and Los Angeles, according to Finkel.

"L.A. is every bit as exciting as New York in terms of art," says the journalist, who left New York for Santa Monica three years ago to cover the West Coast scene. "It's just with different galleries and museums and artists leading the way."

Martindale also points out that local art buyers are evolving into serious collectors and a growing number of Angelenos are building up collections rather than picking art in relation to decoration.

"The whole nature of what is developing in Los Angeles is creating a situation where it can be the art capital," he says.

Information, <http://www.laartshow.com/>.