

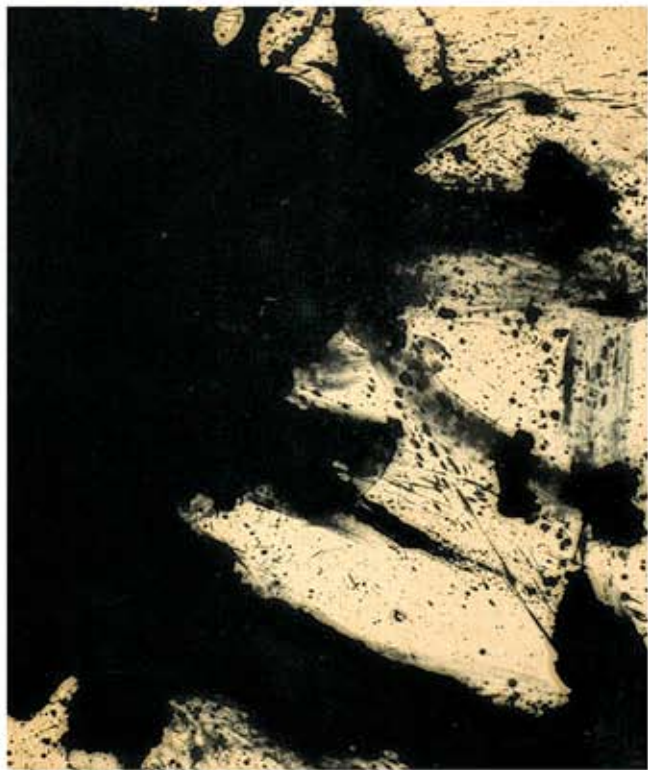
HAUTE LIVING

THE NEW STANDARD FOR LUXURY

L.A. Art Show

Rain, not shine, and the show did go on.

By Sally Gales



On the evening of January 23, wine flowed, celebrities gathered, musicians played live music, and fanciful hors d'oeuvres were served. Beautiful gowns swished as elegant ladies mused over contemporary art and deep voices murmured as men in designer suits discussed the paintings. The opening gala of Los Angeles' 13th Annual Art Show was the place to be on this Wednesday evening in January.

Held at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, the opening gala marked the first night of the four-day event. The art show boasted more than 125 exhibitors from around the world including Charles Cowles Gallery from New York, George Stern Fine Arts from California, Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, and Steps Gallery from England, and many more. The dealers brought with them more than 10,000 examples of fine art, from cutting-edge contemporary pieces to some of history's finest works, resulting in the L.A. Art Show being one of the largest art exhibitions to ever take place on the West Coast.

This year also marked the first time ever that the International Fine Print Dealers Association's Los Angeles Fine Print Fair joined the exhibition. By joining the show, they offered a variety of prints at lesser prices, which enabled the L.A. Art show to expand its interest to beginner collectors.

The honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa, mayor of Los Angeles, was named Honorary Gala Chair. "It is a privilege to be a part of what has become such a culturally monumental event in our city," remarked Villaraigosa, "and a pleasure to simultaneously contribute to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Latino Arts Initiative."

Despite the pouring rain, an unstable market, and high art prices, the 2008 art show was able to raise a record-breaking \$20 million in sales, primarily thanks to the 25,000 attendees. Some bold-faced names in attendance were Patricia Heaton, William Shatner, Steve Martin, Billy Crystal, Kevin Bacon, David Eigenberg, and Owen Wilson (who purchased a \$12,000 piece by Maya Lin). A portion of the proceeds from the gala will help fund Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement at the LACMA in the spring of 2008.

In addition to the exhibition of fine art, attendees were able to sample cuisine from some of Los Angeles' most acclaimed restaurants as well as enjoy select cocktails. The show also offered a series of lectures and presentations including "Art Collectors' Boot Camp," a wine tasting with Ed Killian presented by Architectural Digest and Soverain Wines. One of the most popular panelists was George Melrod of Art Ltd. who had standing room only when he explored Los Angeles as a legitimate art capital.

Based on this year's amazing turnout, discussion of next year's gala has already begun. There is talk of expanding the venue for 2009 and the 14th Annual Los Angeles Art Show has dates set for January 21-25, 2009.

This year's art show may be over, but its results have placed Los Angeles on the road to becoming a legitimate art capital in the world's view. The 13th Annual Los Angeles Art Show was an affair to remember and certainly leaves art connoisseurs and appreciators in anticipation to see what next year will bring.