

L.A. CONVERGENCE

1119
5 centuries of fine art, photography and prints showcased

BY JIM FARBER > LA.COM

Attention, fine-art shoppers! Los Angeles is about to be caught up in frenzy of art fairs offering five centuries of potential collectibles — from Old Master etchings and California impressionist landscapes, to modernist photography and the most cutting-edge contemporary art work.

This three-part event promises to be a visual bonanza, as hundreds of galleries from around the world gather to showcase their wares. It's an artistic convergence that will offer serious collectors (as well as the neophyte) an opportunity to experience a veritable kaleidoscope of art, while, at the same time increasing their savvy by attending expert seminars on the art of collecting art.

Beginning today (and running through Sunday), the 17th installment of Photo L.A. will take place at its new home, the Barker Hangar, adjacent to the Santa Monica Airport. This prominent fair offers every form of photography imaginable — from diminutive 19th-century daguerreotypes to contemporary digital prints the size of billboards.

There will be walls and walls hung with brightly lit photographs, as well as bins stocked to overflowing and portfolios stacked one atop the other. If photography is your thing, Photo L.A. is the place.

Beginning Jan. 24, painting, sculpture, installation art and printmaking take center stage.

The Los Angeles Art Show (Jan. 24-27, also at the Barker Hangar) will showcase 80 local and international dealers representing 500 years of art production. And for the first time in its

13-year history, the event will be presented in tandem with the Los Angeles Fine Print Fair.

The hip alternative will be Art L.A. (Jan. 25-27 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium). Now in its fourth year, this fair is all about art on the cutting edge, featuring 64 dealers and gallery owners (half from Los Angeles) that emphasize the shock of the new.

"The first L.A. Art



James Rosenquist's "Space Dust 1989," above, is a collage of handmade paper pulp, lithography and various adhered elements. Below left is Aimee Garcia's untitled 2002 oil on canvas.

Fairs were well presented and included a lot of young artists," recalls art collector, gallery owner and radio commentator Molly Barnes. "But it felt like a frontier town — the walls didn't quite match the floors. But there was an energy there that the Los Angeles Art Show didn't have."

According to Art L.A.'s director, Tim Fleming, "Our focus is entirely on contemporary art, essentially work produced in the last 10 years. The other show that's billed as 'five centuries of art' is a different mentality."

L.A. Art Show's format, says adviser Daniel Hug, "puts all the galleries on an equal playing field, whether they've been around for 30 years like ACE Gallery or they're six months old. There's not an

old section or a new section. They're all together."

The first major art fair, the Venice Biennale, was held in 1895. But its evolution really dates back to the 1880s when the first entrepreneurial gallery owners began to replace royal patronage and the salon system as avatars of art and commerce.

In her 2007 novel, "The Luncheon of the Boating Party" (Viking Press), Susan Vreeland describes the role these new gallery owners played.

"The dealer is a guide to aesthetic taste for the uninformed, a mentor to artists, a banker if need be, an uncle in affection, a publicist and somewhat of an impresario."

The modern art fairs started out as trade fairs, explains Stephen Cohen, founder of Photo L.A. and Art L.A. "Then the public began to find out about them.

Twenty-five years ago you didn't find many collectors; it was mostly dealers (in places like Basel, Venice, New York and Miami) buying material they would sell. Now the dealers are in competition with institutions and collectors, so the prices have gone crazy."

With so much to see, you may find yourself feeling like Alice's White Rabbit, dashing here, dashing there, babbling, "So much to see. So little time."

But ultimately that's part of the fun. In the end, whether you spend \$15 or \$15 million, the experience to be had at an art fair can be totally enriching.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2008 DN

TIPS

for faring well at the fair.

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Most dealers love the chance to discuss the art and their artists. They're also always

an educational opportunity to discover what you like and don't like. Then you can start to learn more about the art and artists that appeal to you.

3. If you make a purchase, make sure the dealer's receipt gives detailed specifics about the work:

relevant provenance.

4. Sign the gallery's guest list. This way you will be notified about openings and any special sales. It's also good to list any specific interests.

5. Take advantage of the seminars that the fairs offer. This is

6. Don't be afraid to haggle, especially toward the end of a fair. Dealers are there to sell, and they would rather go home with their pockets filled. But do it tastefully. If you are already a collector, consider the possibility of trading work. That's also an

much art in one place can be overwhelming, and you may end up making a purchase you regret. Take your time. Most dealers will allow you to put a work on hold for a few hours. Then you can have a second look.

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preview >

PHOTO L.A.

>Where: Barker Hangar, 3021 Airport Ave., Santa Monica.

>When: Noon to 8 p.m. today and Saturday, noon to 6 p.m. Sunday.

>Cost: \$20 for the day, \$30 for a weekend pass. Seminar tickets sold separately.

>Info: (323) 937-4659 or www.artfairsinc.com.



LOS ANGELES ART SHOW AND FINE ART PRINT FAIR

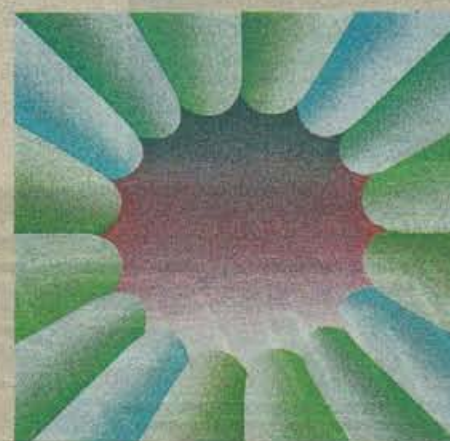
>Where: Barker Hangar, 3021 Airport Ave., Santa Monica.

>When: Opening 7 to 10 p.m. Jan. 23. Regular hours: noon to 7 p.m.

Jan. 24, noon to 8 p.m. Jan. 25 and 26, noon to 6 p.m. Jan. 27.

>Cost: Opening night \$200, daily admission \$20.

>Info: (310) 822-9145 or www.laartshow.com.



ART L.A.

>Where: Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica.

>When: Opening 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Patrons), 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Jan. 24. Regular hours: noon to 8 p.m. Jan. 25 and 26, noon to 6 p.m. Jan. 27.

>Cost: Preview: \$150 (in advance), \$200 (at the door). Daily admission: \$15, \$25 for a three-day pass.

>Info: (323) 937-4659 or www.artfairsinc.com. Jan. 24-27, shuttle buses will be

