

# The Malibu Times

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#### SHOW AND TELL

The numbers are in, and they're one for the record books. The Los Angeles Art Show pulled in 25,000 Angelinos and sales of nearly \$25 million.

An artsy crowd enjoyed a feast for the eyes at the Barker Hangar on opening night. Despite a serious downpour, the fashionistas came well-equipped, sporting Burberry trenches, Prada scarves, felt fedoras and Gucci umbrellas. There were plenty of jaw-dropping style statements, but even a white three-piece suit with mink cape and cowboy boots couldn't compete with what was on the walls.

This year's expo was an endless showcase of dazzling, thought-provoking and whimsical works like an original Blue Dob print from super-hot Japanese pop artist Takashi Murakami. For a mere \$9,500, his signature smiley face could have been yours.

Fans of Robert Rauschenberg had several pieces to choose from. \$420,000 would get you his acrylic on vinyl and aluminum painting with its black, white and green floral motif or his unique fabric transfer featuring old car grills and dated license plates.

Between exhibits, art lovers like William Shatner, Owen Wilson and Rebecca De Mornay snacked on tasty braised short ribs from Primativo, farfalle from I Cugini, and roasted eggplant and smoked mozzarella from Pane e Vino. A jazzy quartet set the stage playing American standards while servers made the rounds with platters filled with cold-weather comfort food like corn fritters and retro fare like pigs-in-a-blanket.

There was something to marvel at around every turn. You just had to stop and stare at Armando Romero's flying hogs in bumble bee suits set against a 1940s industrialized backdrop. "That's the playful aspect of his art," said exhibitor Betina Tasende. "He has a lot to say about urban decay." The artist also pays homage to the old masters with a commercial twist. His scene of Caravaggio's last supper features a jumbo box of KFC fries while his take on Veronese contains images of Yogi the Bear and Tony the Tiger.

Artists found inspiration in the oddest of places from a massive portrait of Homer Simpson fashioned out of "I Love New York" bumper stickers to Suong Kangchareon's depictions of aging Burbank burger joints, Glendale motels and San Gabriel bowling alleys.

Harry Bertola's fanciful-sound sculpture looked like a waist-high pile of steel spaghetti and made a wonderful resonating sound. "I thought I was going to get in trouble," confessed one admirer in a hushed tone, "but they told me I am supposed to touch it."

Actor Wesley Paris and recording artist Lisa Rine, meantime, marveled at a mind-blowing optical illusion by Patrick Hughes.

"He calls it a reverse perspective," exhibitor Matthew Flowers explained. "It looks like a two-dimensional flat object, but in fact it's three-dimensional and moves as you move. It's a marvelous trick on your brain."

From sensational sculptures to eye-popping paintings, the annual expo featured thousands of prized pieces from around the world and each and every one was a sight to behold.



Davina Bulford Cooper shows her rave faves at the LA Art Show. Photo by Devon Meyers/TMT