

Collecting

FTWeekend



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Why artist-collectors are doing things differently

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Dream collection
Great works you could still get your hands on

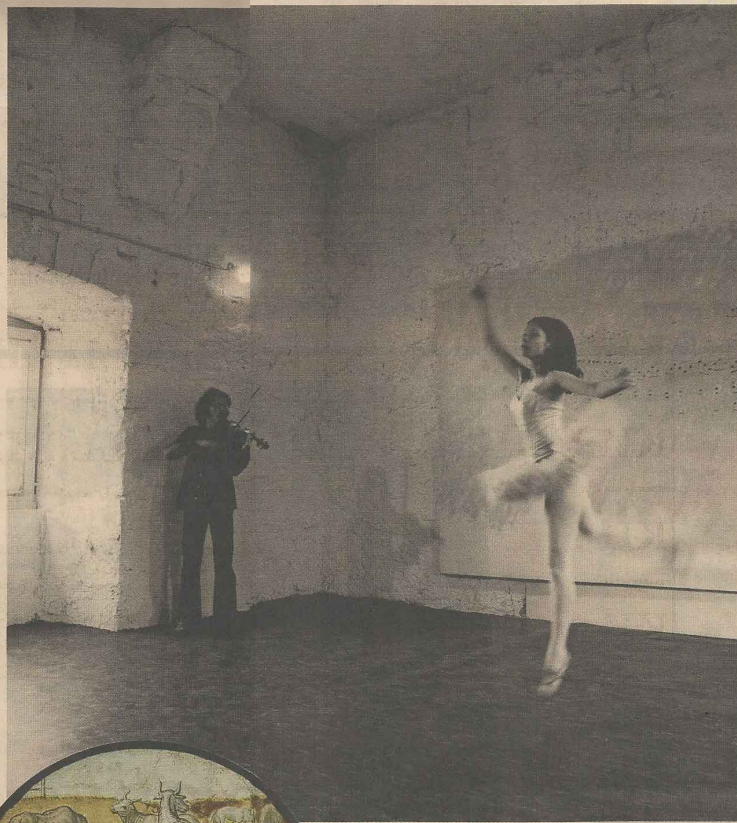
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Collecting



Next week he opens *Colour Set Free: British Painting from 1946-1975*, featuring works – partly loaned, partly for sale – by Patrick Heron, Alan Davie, Ivon Hitchens, Peter Lanyon, Paul Feiler and Ceri Richards.

The show, curated by Peter Khoroch, author of the definitive monograph on Hitchens, is inspired by Heron's own groundbreaking 1953 show *Space in Colour*, for which Heron wrote the catalogue. It sought to open the eyes of British collectors to the pleasures of colour and spatial design in the work of Heron's contemporaries. As Green says, "Not many dealers can afford to do this. For clients, it is like going to a museum show, but also being able to buy a few things – the ultimate luxury."

Another treat this summer will be the Weiss Gallery exhibition *Cornelius Johnson: Painter to King & Country*, which coincides with the opening of London Art Week in July. Dealer Mark Weiss is celebrating 30 years of business in London by gathering together over 30 works by the accomplished court painter to Charles I.

Although his is a commercial gallery, most of the works are being loaned by the private individuals and public institutions to whom Weiss initially sold them, and will not be for sale. The exhibition promises to be a service to scholarship – the first ever large-scale show of Johnson's work.

In another key show during London Art Week, medieval specialist Sam Fogg offers *Gilded Light*, a display of 16th-century stained glass roundels from the collections of Sir Thomas Neave and others. The show has been 15 years

'For clients, it is like going to a museum show, but also being able to buy things – the ultimate luxury'

It's the way you sell 'em

Curating | Commercial galleries are mounting exhibitions with star loans and scholarly curation in a bid to attract buyers. By Emma Crichton-Miller

Among the 286 exhibitors setting out their stalls at Art Basel this year, one will have no works to sell at all. Luxembourg & Dayan, the New York and London-based gallery owned by Daniella Luxembourg and Amalia Dayan, will present one large pink abstract canvas on loan from a German foundation. At two-hourly intervals, the booth will host a violinist and a ballerina, the violinist playing over and over the bars of music from Stravinsky's score for *Pulcinella* (1920) that are painted on the canvas, while the dancer improvises then repeats her improvisation.

The work is by Jannis Kounellis, the Greek artist who became a leading figure in the Arte Povera movement in Italy in the 1960s. First performed at Documenta 5 in 1972, "Da inventare sul posto (To Invent on the Spot)" is a key early experimental piece by the artist, concerned with chance, improvisation

and the reinvention of the past. For Luxembourg and Dayan, the significant expense of bringing the canvas, dancer and violinist together, for a show with no immediate commercial gain, is justified by their long-term – and lucrative – commitment to the artist's oeuvre. As Luxembourg puts it, "It reveals how serious you are towards your market. Part of engaging with art that is not necessarily at the centre of fashion is that you have to create understanding. The small details matter. Our clients want all of this."

Far from simply selling stock, commercial galleries are increasingly upping the ante by mounting museum-quality shows, sometimes with hired curators, scholarly catalogues and loaned exhibits, buttressing the few works that are actually for sale with a wealth of contextual material. In doing so, they are confident that the few sales



Clockwise from top left: Ceri Richards' 'Shadows in a Room' (1950); performance of Jannis Kounellis's 'Da inventare sul posto (To Invent on the Spot)' at Documenta 5 in 1972; roundel after a design by Lambert van Noort (c1560)

they make, at high prices, will justify the expense.

Pilar Ordovas, former international director and deputy chairman of postwar and contemporary art in Europe at Christie's, opened her eponymous gallery on London's Savile Row in 2011 on this principle.

"I don't exhibit at fairs at all," Ordovas says. A programme of consistently thoughtful, focused exhibitions at her London and New York spaces is complemented by collaborations with public museums such as the Dulwich Picture Gallery (*Painting from Life: Carracci-Freud*, in 2012) and the Rijksmuseum (*Rembrandt-Auerbach: Raw Truth*, 2013-14). "I would rather do projects like that," she adds. It does not mean there is nothing to buy. This summer Ordovas opens *Muntognas*, an exhibition of eight works

by Not Vital, the Swiss sculptor whose first major UK public exhibition opened in May at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Visiting Vital's home in Engadin, in the Romansh-speaking region of Switzerland, the gallerist discovered this body of his work – slices of Chinese marble which reveal, in their veins, mountainous landscapes (prices range from \$100,000 to \$130,000).

"If you are selling a work, you have a responsibility to represent it correctly," Luxembourg says. She and Dayan are not the first dealers to acknowledge this. In 1919, legendary French dealer Paul Guillaume presented his first exhibition of African and Oceanic art, with a catalogue written by critic Henri Clouzot and collector André Level, intent on creating a taste for the tribal and modern works he himself so admired.

As Jonathan Green, director of London dealership Richard Green, puts it, "As a dealer, you cannot sit on your hands and wait for clients to walk in".

in the making, with Fogg slowly gathering examples.

Neave began buying these large roundels, dated 1450-1550, from the Low Countries in the 1780s. Besides him, Emile Zola and Howard Hodgkin have also admired these exceptional works, which were created by some of the leading artists of the 16th century. All are for sale, ranging in price from £1,000 to £40,000, in an exemplary introduction to an art form that remains undervalued today.

Luxembourg & Dayan at Art Basel, June 16-19, artbasel.com;
'Muntognas', Ordovas, London, to August 5, ordovasart.com;
'Colour Set Free', Richard Green, London, June 15-July 15, richardgreen.com;
'Cornelius Johnson', Weiss Gallery, London, June 30-July 15, weissgallery.com;
'Gilded Light', Sam Fogg, London, samfogg.com; London Art Week, July 1-8, londonartweek.co.uk