# FRIEZE IN LONDON: THE GOOD NEWS

Sanya Kantarovsky

## Consequences of Brexit

Seen from France, the London art market—with the consequences of Brexit, the simultaneous rise of the French capital, and the growing importance of Art Basel Paris (to be held October 24–26, 2025, at the Grand Palais)—would not appear to be in a favorable position. This impression might seem to be confirmed by figures published in the online art magazine *Hyperallergic*, which reports, based on official financial statements, that in 2024 two of the art market's giants suffered significant losses in the UK. The galleries Hauser & Wirth and Zwirner both saw their pre-tax profits fall by around 90 percent.

## Eva Langret

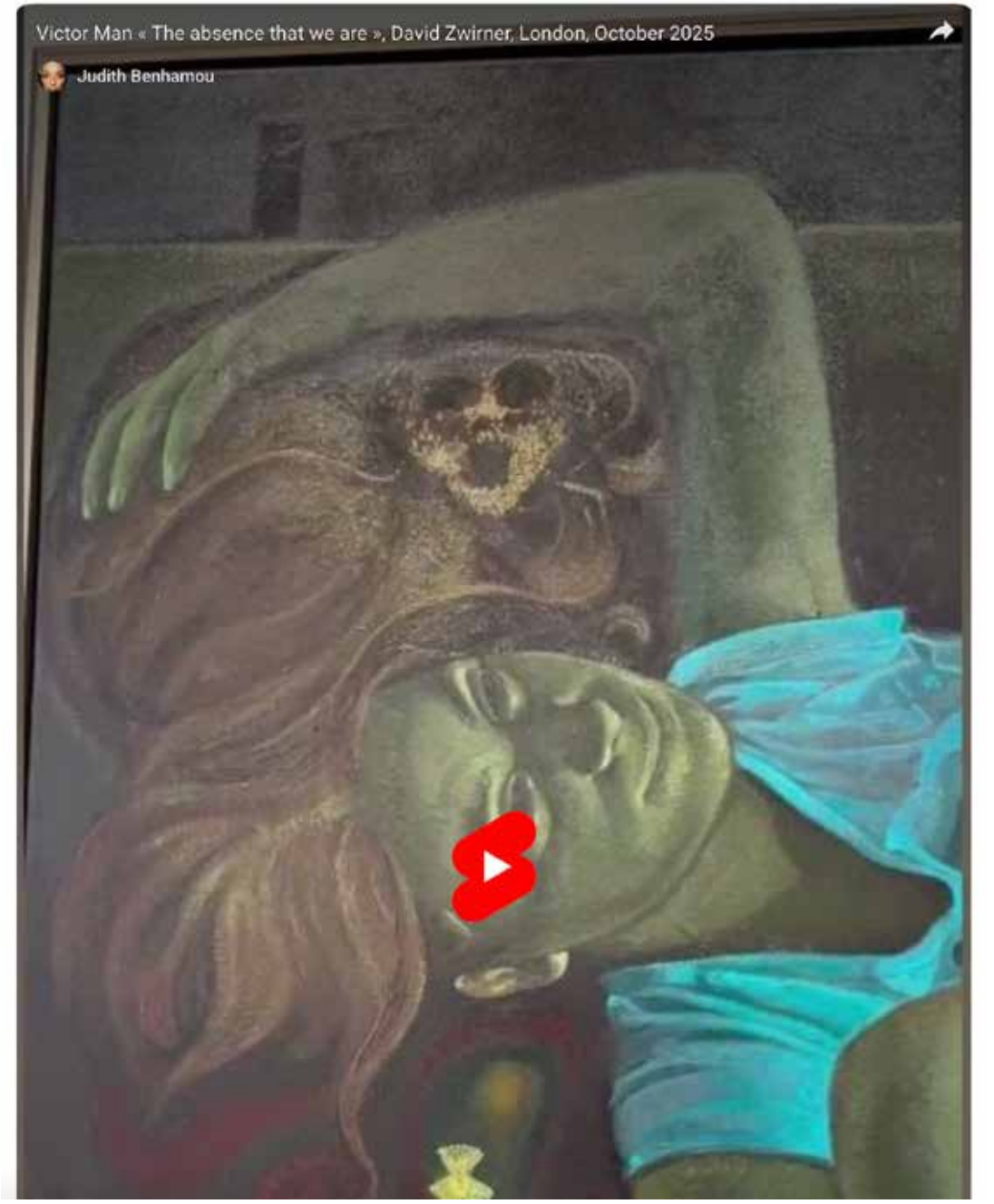
In reality, the situation is more nuanced. From October 15 to 19, London's Regent's Park hosts under its tents the market's most anticipated annual moment: the twin fairs Frieze London (160 contemporary galleries) and Frieze Masters (120 galleries of ancient and modern art). "There's room for two fairs at the same time, in Paris and London," declares the Frenchwoman Eva Langret, who heads Frieze London and is eager not to fuel any cross-Channel rivalries. "London is particularly vibrant right now, with, among other things, the opening of new spaces." Across the city, galleries are responding with ambitious programming.

Pilar Ordovas

On Savile Row, dealer Pilar Ordovas is staging a series of "Dialogues" between ancient African and Oceanic art and modern and contemporary Western art. From an exceptional Picasso drawing—clearly a preparatory study for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, *Nude Standing* (1906)—to a large sculpture from Papua New Guinea belonging to the Beyeler Foundation in Basel (and therefore not for sale), the display is limited in number but remarkable in quality. Works are priced between £25,000 and £6 million. "The market for exceptional works remains resilient. The current difficulty lies rather in the fact that no one wants to part with very good pieces," notes Pilar Ordovas.

Pablo Picasso

Victor Man

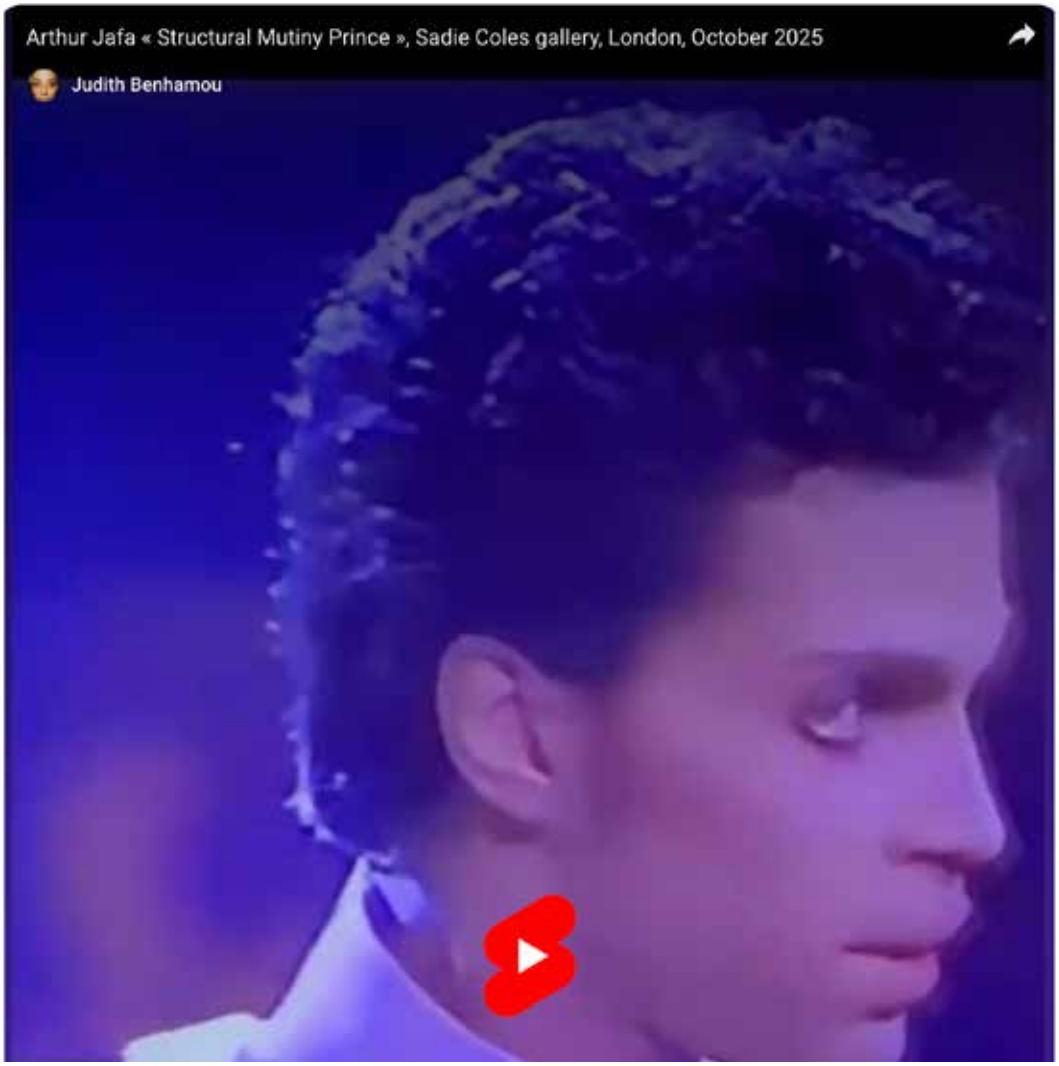



Zwirner, meanwhile, is presenting in London for the first time one of its new recruits, the gifted Romanian artist Victor Man (born 1974), who lives between Rome and Berlin. It is arguably the most talked-about exhibition, in a gallery, in the British capital. His enigmatic figures seem to harbor macabre secrets or to illustrate fantastical legends, bathed in a dark, greenish light. The paintings, priced from €400,000, had nearly all sold after a week on view. As for Hauser & Wirth, they sold out their entire show (with works priced between 110,000 and 625,000 Swiss francs) devoted to Nicolas Party (born 1980), the Swiss painter known for a figuration that is at once simple and meticulously executed, in bright, contrasting colors.

## Sadie Coles

In London, two galleries particularly active on the local scene announced new spaces this autumn. Sadie Coles—who already runs three galleries in the British capital—is one of the pillars of contemporary art. "We've had a satisfactory level of activity since the summer," she explains. "The market is active at all levels. Several new private exhibition venues have also recently opened in townhouses, such as YDP, founded by philanthropist Do Yan to promote the Asian scene, and Ibraaz, dedicated to the Middle East. That said, we must now be especially cautious about our expenses, particularly regarding our participation in fairs. We're also keeping a close eye on our price levels."

## Arthur Jafa



Among others, Sadie Coles is showing for the first time the American artist Arthur Jafa (born 1960), one of today's most prominent figures (his works are priced between $65,000 and $145,000). Winner of the Golden Lion at the 2019 Venice Biennale, he was also exhibited in Arles at Luma in 2022 in Paris at the Bourse de Commerce in the winter of 2025. His work consistently addresses the African-American condition. In one of his most famous videos " Love is the message . The message is death" he quotes actress Amandla Stenberg, who asks: "What would America be like if we loved Black people as much as we love Black culture?" Jafa focuses in particular on the aura of certain pop-music icons. At Sadie Coles he unveils a retouched video of Prince, endlessly dancing amid the wild cheers of his audience—a reflection of the star's magnetism.

## Stuart Shave

Sanya Kantarovksy

Like Sadie Coles, Stuart Shave—the founder of Modern Art Gallery—will open a large new space in London's most expensive district, St James's, on November 14. The dealer, who also operates an upper-floor gallery in Paris, observes: "London is more alive than ever. There's a lot of talk about crisis, but the problem is that the art world exaggerates. If we look at the intrinsic quality of some contemporary artists whose prices have skyrocketed in recent years, we realize they didn't deserve it. At the gallery, we raise prices very slowly. I like to think of artists as my business partners. I think about their market future twenty years ahead—and I trust my professional choices. The results of the last Basel fair were the best we've ever had."

## Sanya Kantarovsky

At Frieze London, Modern Art is located at the fair's entrance, showing the ceramic work of an astonishing figurative painter, Sanya Kantarovsky (born 1982 in Moscow, based in New York). His vases and plates, decorated with highly expressive—indeed expressionist—figures distorted by emotion (priced between $15,000 and $45,000), all sold on the opening day. "In ten years, Sanya's prices have doubled," Shave notes. His work now belongs to the permanent collections of institutions such as LACMA in Los Angeles and Tate in London.

## T. Venkanna

T.Venkanna

More broadly, one might say that this year's Frieze London reveals several tendencies: photographs have almost disappeared from booths, installations are less present, and figurative painting—often in bright colors—has flourished across many stands. Such is the case of Indian painter T. Venkanna, represented by Mumbai's Maskara Gallery, who was invited to the fair at the suggestion of established artist Bharti Kher. His small tempera paintings (using egg yolk) depict powerful, fantastical women and are priced around €5,000 each.