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Pinta Has Strong Sophomore Effort



Language

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If the Latin American art fair **Pinta** made a successful debut last November, this year it has come back with a much stronger show. Last year the fair installed 35 dealers from nine countries in the Metropolitan Pavilion at 125 West 18th Street; this year there were 55 dealers from 14 countries, and the fair spilled over into the Altman Building next door. And while last year the fair strongly favored contemporary works, the 2008 edition was evenly divided between contemporary and modern offerings, with galleries showing high-quality examples of abstract, concrete, neo-concrete, kinetic, and conceptual art, and more.

The three directors of Pinta — **Diego Costa Peuser**, **Alejandro Zaia**, and **Mauro Herlitzka**, all returning from last year — have gone all out to make the fair, which ran November 13–16, an important and appealing U.S. destination for Latin American art. Chief among their efforts is the initiation of a [Museum Acquisition Fund](#) that makes contributions to institutions interested in starting or expanding collections of Latin American art; the eight inaugural recipients are the **Harvard Art Museum**, **El Museo del Barrio**, the **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**, **MoMA**, the **Tate Modern**, Austin's **Blanton Museum of Art**, the **Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires**, and the **Museo de Arte de Lima**. It is not surprising that dealers said that museums were active buyers.

The opening night on November 13 was packed with the usual Latin American art aficionados as well as collectors who had come to New York a few days early for the **Sotheby's** and **Christie's** sales being held November 18–20. Attendance was good throughout the weekend, and dealers seemed very happy with business and hopeful about being invited back next year. “Everyone sold something,” said one dealer, an

observation no one else denied.

Galeria Emma Molina from Nuevo Leon, Mexico, showed **Julio Le Parc**, the Argentina-born, Paris-based kinetic art pioneer. Molina says that she sold a major Le Parc painting, *Rotations* (1974), composed of “moving” gray and white squares, to a Mexican collector for \$150,000 on the opening night. **La Cometa Galeria** from Bogotá sold two large paintings of bullfighters and horses by Colombian artist **David Manzur** to a Latin American buyer for \$220,000 each. “We did not know the buyer,” said gallery director **Esteban Jaramillo Flórez**, “but he knew Manzur’s works.” **Galerie Barbara Thumm** from Berlin dedicated a solo booth to Berlin- and Lima-based Peruvian artist **Fernando Bryce**. She reported selling out the entire booth: a suite of his drawings to the **Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires** for €50,000 (\$63,000) and two satiric constructions, one with a bronze eagle atop a pile of *Foreign Affairs* magazines, the other with an elephant atop a stack of the *Empire Review*, for €16,000 each. **Nohra Haime** of New York sold a painting by Colombian artist **Alvaro Barrios**, whose works combine Pop art and Surrealism, for around \$20,000.

Works by **Jesús Rafael Soto**, another kinetic pioneer, were much in evidence in the show. New York’s **Adler & Conkright** showed works by him as well as fellow Venezuelans **Gego**, **Carlos Cruz-Diez**, and **Alejandro Otero**; one of the standouts in the booth was a very rare, early black-and-white Soto work, *Untitled (Kinetic Structure of Geometric Elements)* from ca. 1956, priced at \$475,000. New York’s **Leon Tovar** had a large metal-and-wood mural by Soto, *Mural Cinetico* (1983), priced at more than \$1 million.

“We tried to be edgier than usual,” said New York dealer **Mary-Anne Martin**, “which means we aren’t showing pictures of Mexican peasants.” Instead she was showing drawings by **Frida Kahlo**, a large painting by contemporary Argentine artist **Guillermo Kuitca**, and paintings and sculptures by Panama-based artist **Isabel de Obaldia**, one of which sold for \$20,000.

All in all, both exhibitors and organizers were pleased with Pinta’s sophomore effort. “The exhibitors all bring their best works,” said fair chairman **Alejandro Zaia**, “and the collectors and museum curators come.” **Ana Sokoloff**, the Colombia-born art adviser and former head of Latin American art at Christie’s, summed it up by saying, “Pinta has quality and variety. It represents who we are.”

[Market News](#), [Art Market](#)