

# M+B

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## Paris Photo LA Taps the West Coast's Emerging Art Market

By Yasmine Mohseni  
April 28, 2014



Cristina De Middel, #145 Man with Ideas. Photo: Courtesy Black Ship



Allen Ruppersberg My Secret Life (1974/2012)  
Photo: Courtesy Marc Selwyn Fine Art.

This past weekend, the place to be was Paramount Pictures Studios. That's where the second edition of Paris Photo Los Angeles took up temporary residence from the evening of Thursday, April 24 until 6 p.m. yesterday.

Ann Philbin, director of the Hammer Museum, she was there. So was Roxana Marcoci, photography department senior curator at The Museum of Modern Art, and Agnès Sire, director of the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson. Some Hollywood stars attended too—Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom, Jodie Foster, Jamie Lee Curtis, Julie Delpy—as well as Joni Mitchell, French director-producer Claude Lelouch, and Moby. And local collectors walked the booths. Danny First, Stefan Simchowicz, Maria Bell, and Lauren and Benedikt Taschen, for example, were among the Los Angeles–based contingent.

All of them strolled the red carpet, browsing 81 exhibitor booths from 18 different countries spread out across four sound stages and the New York Backlot, which hosted galleries and bookshops like Taschen, Artbook D.A.P., and Printed Matter, Inc. This area was the fair's social focal point: visitors stopped at food trucks for a taco or ice cream before heading to the soundstages to take in vintage and contemporary photography and video art. Many families came pushing strollers and friends seated on fake New York City stoops caught up over drinks to compare notes on what they most liked on view. In this sense, Paris Photo Los Angeles felt more convivial and less 'business as usual' compared to other fairs where art advisors and collectors jockey for a prime spot at the most coveted booth.

The environment encouraged conversations between visitor and exhibitor, and by Friday evening, the fair's first night open to the public, sales were moving along. That day, New York collector Beth Rudin DeWoody arrived to Paramount Studios straight from the airport, she said, and at Marc Selwyn snapped up one of Allen Ruppersberg's My Secret Life (1974/2012) photographs, from an edition of three, for \$35,000. At Galerie Christophe Gaillard, she bought a Pierre Molinier priced between \$6,000 and \$15,000, and, she said, "a bunch of vintage books—this is my first time here, I love the location, it's just cool."

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Katy Erdman of 303 Gallery said that on the first day she sold eight works from various series by Stephen Shore (2009-2013) at \$12,000 each.

LA-based Marc Selwyn Fine Art sold two works of Allen Ruppersberg's *My Secret Life* (1974/2012) from an edition of three, \$35,000 each (including the one sold to Ms. DeWoody), as well as three works by William Wegman from the *Contact* series (2014), an edition of seven priced at \$10,000 each. And sales didn't stop there.

Many works on view catered to a star-power-loving clientele, with many booths offering photos of celebrities. Galerie Daniel Blau's strategic decision to display David Bailey's celebrity-driven series *Uncharted* paid off: photos "Andy Warhol" (1965) went for \$85,000 and "Bill Brandt" (1982) for \$16,000. Hollywood local Diane Rosenstein said that for her eponymous gallery, the fair was "very successful with very strong sales." She sold two works from Karin Apollonia Müller's *Citylights* series (2013) that went for \$12,500 each.

New York-based Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery (in a joint booth with Howard Greenberg Gallery) connected with new California clients and sold works by Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky, all of them price in the \$22,000 to \$59,000 range. Chelsea neighbors Koenig & Clinton sold several works from Ed Ruscha series *Dutch Details* (1971) and *8900 Sunset Blvd* (1966), priced between \$20,000 and \$80,000, while the Arizona-based Etherton Gallery reported sales for both books and Danny Lyon prints totaling more than \$200,000.

First time exhibitors also fared well: Black Ship sold more than 36 works (all dated 2013) from its solo show of works by artist Spanish artist Cristina De Middel, priced from \$2,300 to \$7,000.

Kate Werble of New York's Kate Werble Gallery, who said she generally shies away from art fairs, mentioned that she felt validated by her choice to participate. From the solo show of emerging New York artist John Lehr, she sold two pieces, including *Auto Body* (2013). All of Lehr's works were priced between \$2500 and \$6000.

With over 30 exhibitors opting to display a single artist, solo shows seemed to be a trend at this year's fair. Two particularly strong solo booths were Cherry & Martin and M+B Gallery, both Los Angeles-based. Cherry & Martin's presentation of Brian Bress's video and collage work, was set against the backdrop of tropical wallpaper covering every wall surface. Visitors were visibly drawn to the space, which evidently helped sales: two videos were sold at \$14,000 each, including *Blindseye Organizer (Max)* (2013); two editions from the photo series *A River* (2009) sold at \$5000 each; and two of Bress's small unique collages went for \$2500.

Next to Cherry & Martin was M+B Gallery's solo show by Brooklyn-based artist Mariah Robertson, whose works were offered for between \$12,000 and \$20,000. Robertson is known for creating 100-foot-long photographs, which are usually hung on a wall and across the floor, like the train of a dress. Here, one had been wound and placed in a Plexiglas case, giving the photograph a sculptural quality. A representative at M+B said that approximately half of the work on display had sold, notably one piece acquired by the UBS Art Collection.

Photography is generally considered a good entry point for new collectors due both to the accessibility of the medium and the often-attainable price points. With Los Angeles positioned as an emerging market, this fair seems to be a good fit for its audience. And the fact that a collector has the option of buying a \$100 James Welling book, a \$1000 James Welling print, or a \$25,000 original James Welling photograph underscores the fair's desire to appeal to a varied clientele.



Mariah Robertson, 8 (2014)  
Photo: Courtesy M+B Gallery