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Frieze London diary: from a moment with Andy Murray to the answer to a Paula Rego mystery

Plus, a cross-generational collector chat and an artistic airing of London's sexual geography

The Art Newspaper

12 October 2023

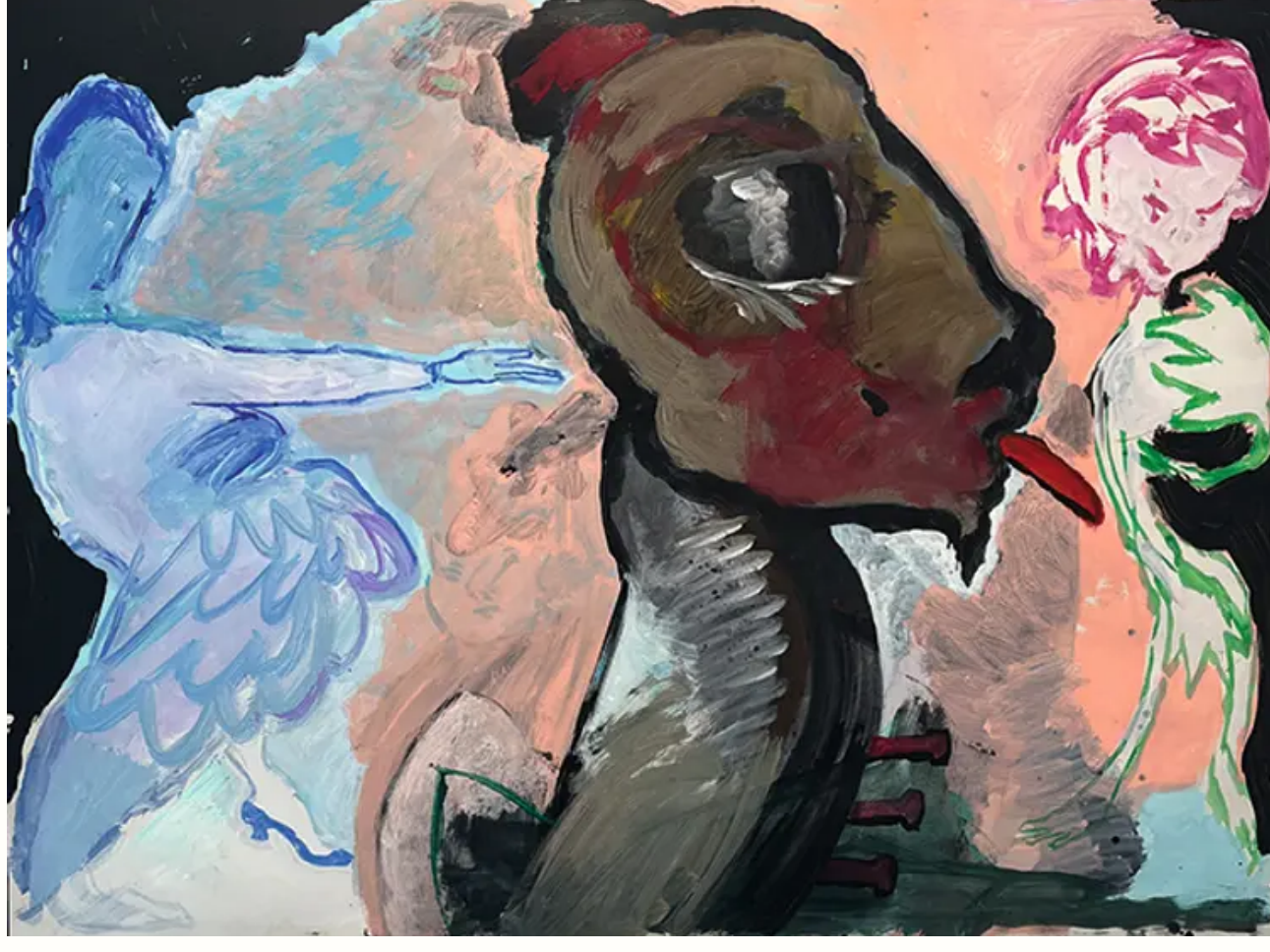
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The Art Newspaper is the only game in town, as Andy Murray might say

Andy gets a taste of the art racket

London's art fairs are packed to the rafters this week, drawing collectors, curators and the odd sporting superstar. We don't meet a Wimbledon champion very often (ie, never), so bumping into Andy Murray at Frieze London was just ace (pardon the pun). Meanwhile, over at the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair at Somerset House, movie star Gerard Butler, the face of top-notch films such as *Olympus Has Fallen*, could be seen perusing the stands in the search of the next African art star. So who'll turn up next? We hear Madonna is in town...



The mystery behind the Nick in Paula Rego's equally mysterious 1983 work *Nick's Favourite* has been solved

Nick Serota's early brush with Paul Rego

ou'd assume that the Nick in the title of *Nick's Favourite*, the vivid 1983 work on paper by Paula Rego on show at Victoria Miro's stand, would refer to Rego's son, the film director and producer Nick Willing. After all, Willing is a devoted champion of his late mother and his 2017 film *Secrets and Stories* is widely regarded as offering a unique insight into her life and work. But you'd be wrong. The Nick in the work—which depicts a dog-like creature with lolling tongue, accompanied by flouncy-skirted female and a strange plant-creature—is in fact Nicholas Serota, former Tate director and now chair of Arts Council England who, when he was a youthful director of the Whitechapel Gallery, visited Rego in her studio in 1983 and identified the work as his favourite. Pity he didn't buy it: the price tag would have been considerably less than its current £450,000.



Adam Farah-Saad's replica washbasin might trigger happy memories in some fairgoers

Pass the smelling salts...

London's sexual geography is getting an artistic airing this week with Adam Farah-Saad's stainless steel fountain, at Public Gallery's stand, a replica of the washbasin in the men's toilets at popular London cruising spot Wood Green Mall. Tate has acquired the work along with the artist's accompanying wind chime sculpture, featuring bottles of amyl nitrate (all empty, before you ask). Meanwhile, Gasworks Gallery in Vauxhall, is showing Trevor Yeung's scale recreation of the infamous "fuck tree" on Hampstead Heath. Yeung has cast the low-lying trunk of the notorious oak in specially made soap with an "earthy moist scent".

Keep it in the family

Members of two of the art world's most famous families came together at yesterday's Frieze Collector's Conversations. Don and Mera Rubell were the spectators at the gathering, with their son Jason discussing legacy and collecting today. He was joined by two other early Frieze champions, Catherine Petitgas and Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, whose son Eugenio was in the audience. Jason revealed how Patrizia had asked him for advice on how to kindle a teenage Eugenio's interest in art. Evidently, he provided wise counsel: in 2008 Eugenio became a director of his family's foundation and in 2013 he launched Artuner, his contemporary art platform.



Art lovers of a certain age will not want to miss a live performance of 70s German superstars Boney M at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Courtesy Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Rivers of Babylon beckon at end-of-fair bash

As Frieze art week draws to a close (boo hoo), we're all looking forward to the last-day-of-term parties. But one bash in particular is getting us excited—Boney M at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery near London Bridge. The special concert by the group behind disco classics such as *Brown Girl in the Ring* and *Rasputin* marks the closure of the gallery's Glasshouse space and launch of another venue on Tanner Street. Hjellegjerde tells us that she met Boney M group members on a flight from Denmark to London. "I was on my way back from a detox and I saw these three women. I asked, 'who are you?', and they said, 'we're Boney M'. So I asked them to come and perform." Get those 1970s flares on and groove on down.

The Undercover Gallerist

Anonymous reports from behind the scenes at the fair

Nothing changes the mood of a fair like a hangover after the first day of action, although at this point, we (the school of seasoned art dealers) are all in reality on day four of laboured drinking and manufactured conversation. I'm wildly hungover, but made it on time, suited and booted, to try and sell some more art.

Due to my ongoing headache today, I asked some trusted friends to share with me some scandalous gossip from the fair. Much of it was actually libellous—and I'm remembering in my first column that this is the only thing *The Art Newspaper* team told me to avoid—but some information isn't too scandalous for print. One was a classic story of a gallery director having to walk the very long way to their booth to avoid any eye contact with a dalliance from the night before, and the other was a more alarming account of an emerging British artist (unsure if he is showing at the fair) being forcibly removed from a party by the hotel security. Lists are tight this year, friends!

Conversations in the tent suggest that the usual weekend slowdown might be alleviated by an influx of actual collectors coming to London over the weekend before Paris, rather than the usual parents looking for something for their kids to do in rainy October. However, I think we should be honest with ourselves here: if you haven't sold the figurative painting on your booth yet, you probably are not going to.

Diary Frieze London Rubell Collection Paula Rego

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